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OCT 7 1941

THE NEW

STATESMAN AND NATION

The Week-end Review

Vol. XXII. No. 551 [Incorporating THE ATHENÆUM] SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 1941 [Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper] SIXPENCE

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RUSSIA AND THE WAR

"THAT ruined dam is a finer monument than a city surrendered to keep it intact." So Colonel Symonds, one of the A.R.P. experts who has just returned from Moscow, ended a remarkable broadcast in which he described with impressive detail the defences and carriage of the Russian people in their moment of supreme peril and bitter sacrifice. The destruction of the Dnieperstroi dam has haunted the minds of all who have seen Soviet Russia in construction. It was the very symbol of revolutionary achievement, the promise of common prosperity. Its destruction was the cruellest imaginable blow to every Soviet citizen. Yet it was destroyed deliberately, just as the earth is scorched, and farms burnt down, rather than allow it to fall into the hands of the Nazi invader. That spirit, we now know on unimpeachable evidence, animates the Army, the Command and the people. Mr. Vernon Bartlett has since added his voice to that of Colonel Symonds in describing the excellence of the air defence of Moscow, which appears to far exceed the defences of London, and in extolling the remarkable efficiency as well as the utter resolution of the Russian people. It is an extraordinary fact, which has perhaps received too little attention in this country, that during the entire German advance into Russia there are no refugees. No homeless crowd the roads; they are evacuated, or they are killed, or they fight in the rear. They fight in defence of the nation they have built themselves, the achievements which belong to the people of Russia.

The extraordinary spectacle of this ghastly, collosal and heroic campaign which gives reality to the boast of a "people's war," was in the minds of every M.P. when the House of Commons met this week. On this central issue of aid to Russia, Mr. Churchill was but partly reassuring. He reviewed the war as a whole, but while Leningrad is in imminent danger, other events seem comparatively trivial. He spoke in satisfactory terms of our determination to keep our pledge of Syrian independence, of steps, curiously belated, to clear up the absurd situation in Iran and end the anomaly of a German legation in Teheran. His reference to India as a country which, in spite of our repeated promise of freedom, is not to be considered eligible for inclusion in all the promises of the Eight Points of the Charter, was an unhappy reminder of one of Mr. Churchill's blind spots. The Prime Minister warned us not to believe that the Battle of the Atlantic was yet won, though the statement that the total shipping losses of Britain and her Allies during July and August were only one-third of the shipping losses inflicted on Germany and Italy was in itself sufficiently cheering. In some respects the picture compares well with that of twelve months ago. But the future depends on the continued success of Russian resistance and on the capacity of Britain and the Soviet Union to find ways of co-operation both in the military and political fields.

According to German claims the encirclement of Leningrad is now complete. Even if this is true, what does it mean? Marshal Voroshilov has an immense army within the defence area of Leningrad and he has large supplies. The Germans can scarcely by-pass Leningrad as if it were Tobruk. Though the propaganda machine in Berlin has now been cautioning the German public against sanguine hopes of Leningrad's imminent fall, it looks as though the Germans intend to concentrate on its capture. Certainly the tempo of their general offensive elsewhere has, for the moment, slowed down. They seem not to have effected any very serious lodgment on the eastern bank of the Dnieper; the impetus of their potentially most dangerous thrust south-east of Gomel has completely slackened; and in the Smolensk sector Marshal Timoshenko's formidable and promising counter-attack has inflicted very heavy losses on the enemy and gained considerable ground. Against Leningrad Hitler has directed the main weight of attack both by armoured forces and the *Luftwaffe*. There are two possible explanations. One is that German supplies are proving difficult, both in the central sector and in the Ukraine, so that a brief pause for consolidation has become necessary. The other is that the Führer recognises that hopes of destroying the Russian armies before winter must be abandoned—Dr. Goebbels switched at the beginning of September from excessive optimism to pessimistic warnings of a long war in the East—and finds it essential for reasons of internal politics to win rapidly a spectacular prestige victory. If the second explanation be correct, the Russians can fairly claim that their magnificent resistance has enforced on the German High Command a disadvantageous change of plan. There is little doubt that Hitler's

original intention was to strike directly at Moscow by the shortest route in the hope of disrupting Russia's whole organisation. To storm Leningrad is a diversion which, even if successful, must be immensely costly in casualties and (probably) in time, which he can still less afford.

Russia's immediate need is large-scale reinforcement by the Fighter Command of the R.A.F. Given that aid, the U.S.S.R. should be able to hold out until the snows fall, even if Leningrad and Kronstadt are captured and a sea route opened for German supplies. Moscow is not impressed by the expedition to Spitzbergen, the military significance of which is not obvious. With the coming of winter we presumably intend to develop a more active "second front" against the enemy in North Africa. But a North African front is too remote from Germany to lead to lessened German pressure on Russia; nor will expeditions to the Arctic draw off a single German regiment from the East. Co-operation in Iran is now a reality and it has great possibilities. Russia has in any case lost a very important part of her productive resources and supplies and help of all kinds should come through this new route. But the public would have most welcomed from Mr. Churchill some remarks about the situation on the vast coast-line from the North Cape to the Mediterranean which is now lightly held by enemy forces. We have command of the sea; have we not the troops available even for "beard-singeing" operations? Are there no vulnerable points, no positions worth securing, no bases worth denying to the enemy? Uneasiness is inevitable in view of the record of the War Office, which still seems Maginot-minded. Let us be quite clear about one thing. Agreed that no expedition is worth while unless it worries the Germans and makes them move troops and aeroplanes from east to west. But add that the time for action will never arrive if we allow the conventional notions of land operations on the 1914 model to dominate our councils.

Soldiers' Pay

The new scales of family allowances for Service officers represents some recognition of a serious and demoralising state of affairs, but it will do little, we fear, to endear the Treasury to commissioned ranks. In the case of army officers the sole beneficiaries are married subalterns under the age of 30. Hitherto these officers have been receiving 31*s.* 6*d.* a week to support a wife and children (if separated from them) in addition to such meagre allotments as they can make out of 11*s.* a day (less tax) in pay which has to meet mess bills, clothes and all other personal expenses. Under the new dispensation the allowance for a wife and one child will be 42*s.* a week, with 10*s.* 6*d.* more for a second child, and an additional 7*s.* for each further child. This will be a help; but a subaltern over 30 will not benefit unless he has two or more children, and a captain or major with a wife and two children receives no increase at all. Nothing is done for the married officers of 40-50 years of age, who served in the last war, gave up their positions in civil life in order to rejoin the Army as captains or majors (thereby becoming entitled to 16*s.* and 28*s.* 6*d.* a day respectively in gross pay) and are now struggling vainly to deal with pre-war commitments in the shape of rent, rates, insurance policies, school bills and so forth. Except in the case of a lucky few who are subsidised by their late employers or business partners—an odd commentary, this too, on "equality of sacrifice"—these men simply cannot make ends meet. They are being compelled to watch their savings steadily draining away, or are borrowing on their insurance policies in order to buy enough food for their children. It may be said that the whole system of pay is wrong; that we ought to have far more equality and that these commitments are only signs of an unequal society. We must, however, consider groups as they stand in our present system and on this basis it would be wise to recognise that these officers receive very shabby treatment and that it is doing no good to the morale of the Army.

A Restless House. (*By a Parliamentary Correspondent*)

Reassembling, the House was restless, and uneasy in debate. Such is the dizzy pace of events that members returned to find themselves completely out of touch with the reaction of their fellow members.

If the debate had been held on the second sitting day instead of the first, discussion behind the scenes in smoke-room, lobbies and corridors would have given members the "feel" of the House, which was so obviously lacking on Tuesday. Even the so-called Opposition, whose varying fortunes have often formed the theme of these notes, had obviously slipped back. Shinwell, who has done a great deal of speaking during the recess, takes the view that, once Hitlerite Germany is destroyed, the German people will behave in much the same way as any other decent, civilised people. Winterton, in the course of Tuesday's debate, went out of his way to dissent from this point of view by emphasising his belief that all Germans were bad at heart. Hore-Belisha has lost his two closest vassals. Granville has departed from the National Liberal bench to sit with Clement Davies as an Independent. Henry Morris Jones exercised his right to sit on the front Opposition bench amongst the Labour leaders who are not in the Government. Aneurin Bevan, who was to have gone to America on a speaking tour, has decided to remain in this country.

The Prime Minister's announcement of the Government's intention to adjourn the House for a further recess is much disliked by many members of all parties. As Aneurin Bevan rightly told the Prime Minister, if the Government is short of subjects for debate then members can supply them with a number of urgent topics: agricultural wages, soldiers' allowances, the white paper on inflation and wages; above all, man-power and production. If as the Prime Minister told us to-day the Russians have between ten and fifteen million soldiers, but are suffering from the loss of a substantial part of their productive capacity, then the immediate job of this country should be to concentrate this winter on producing arms instead of expanding the Army.

This emphasised one of the most extraordinary of the many extraordinary feats accomplished by the War Office in this war. We are short of coal, the first of all essentials. Miners are now being taken from other essential productive work, but the Army cannot release them from the ranks to which they ought never to have been called.

The most notable point about the Prime Minister's statement was his superb confidence, which obviously pleased the majority of members. What he had to say amounted, when it is analysed, to very little. Where would we be standing to-day in the Atlantic, in Iran, in the Middle East, if it were not for Russia? Members were asking, in view of the Prime Minister's statement that no time had been wasted in sending the Beaverbrook mission to Russia, whether the Government yet realises the pace at which events in this war move. It takes us as long to prepare a mission to go to Russia as it took Hitler to overthrow Poland. Of the Prime Minister's determination to do everything possible to help Russia there can be no question. The question whether his team is equally whole-hearted will be illuminated by the discussions over Moore-Brabazon's indiscretion. It is safe to prophesy that the last of that episode will not be heard this week. Moore-Brabazon made his speech after Russia had been in the war some weeks.

On Wednesday the rejection of the Glen Affric Bill showed Parliament at its best. Tom Johnstone's promise of schemes for utilising the natural resources of the area was an earnest of the post-war planning demanded by Members of all parties.

The Trades Union Congress (*By an Industrial Correspondent.*)

The Trades Union Congress was interesting. Not often are there two divisions as close as those by which the delegates rejected resolutions dealing with the structure and organisation of the Trade Union movement. The more important of these resolutions called for a general inquiry into the basis of Trade Union organisation from the standpoint of its appropriateness and adequacy to the conditions of to-day. The principal opposition came from the two great Unions which claim a roving commission to organise all and sundry—all, that is, except the specific bodies of workers for whom fully recognised Unions have staked out a paramount claim. The General and Municipal Workers and the Transport and General Workers by no means want Trade Unionism to be organised on either "craft" or "industrial" lines. They want freedom to organise when they please, and to swallow up smaller Unions when they get a chance. There is something to be said for their point of view; for under modern conditions an increasing proportion of workers has no life-long attachment to any particular industry or occupation, but can move fairly easily from one sort of machine-minding to another. The fact, however, remains that neither these two Unions nor any others have succeeded in enrolling the majority of these mobile machine-minders, who include a very large number of women, and that industrial Unions are in many respects more attractive and more convenient bargaining agencies. For example, the National Union of Public Employees, which sponsored the resolution, is but a newcomer, whose presence is resented by the two big "general" Unions; but it has been quite remarkably successful in enrolling the manual employees of County and District Councils, and in improving their conditions, and also, more recently, in organising workers in a number of the war emergency services. If the "general" Unions are to do their job properly, they will have to develop further the principle of

autonomous sections organising workers in particular industries. The danger of the huge, general Union is that the members do not get the feeling of really running the show. Bureaucracy creeps in; and, however competent the officials, rank and file enthusiasm is apt to disappear.

* * *

Of wider interest were two other decisions of the Trades Union Congress—the approach to the Russian Trade Unions for the establishment of an Anglo-Soviet Committee, and the decisive repudiation of the Government's appeal for wage-stabilisation. The proposal to set up an Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee is a good one; and it is to be hoped that the Russians will respond promptly, and that the scheme will not be wrecked by an attempt to impose "political" conditions on either side. As for the stabilisation of wages, the policy is obviously unacceptable now, whatever it might have been if it had been put forward at an earlier stage. War wages are in so great a chaos that there is nothing to be said for stabilising them at their existing levels. The agricultural workers, for example, ought evidently to have the further advance they have been demanding; and it is absurd that women's wages in the munition trades are often much lower than those in the "concentration" industries, from which workers are now being transferred to work on munitions. If wages are to be stabilised at all, they will have to be readjusted first; and that will be "some" job. On the other hand, it is hardly possible to accept Sir Walter Citrine's claim that real wages ought to be kept at their pre-war level whatever happens, and that the good sense and voluntary saving of the workers ought to be relied on for keeping consumption down to what can be spared. If this principle of unchanged real wages were to be maintained, it would involve universal rationing, either of all goods or of the total sum which any person could be allowed to spend. It is highly unsatisfactory to let things drift on as they have drifted, with no principle at all and quite irrational wage inequalities between one group of workers and another. Yet this is what seems likely to happen, now that the drift has continued so long; for the truth is that no one is really prepared to face the problem. Wage stabilisation, even after readjustment, would be practicable only if non-wage incomes were stabilised as well. That would mean virtual nationalisation for the war period; and we can be sure the Government will not accept that save in the very last resort.

* * *

Everyone knows that the Trade Disputes Act of 1927 was a vicious, partisan measure adopted by the Tories as an act of vengeance after the General Strike, and directed against both the political and the industrial power of the Trade Unions. But the Tory veto, not only on its repeal, but even on substantial amendment of it, remains; and the Trade Unions, in the interests of national unity, have now dropped the attempt to secure during the war any major change in its provisions and are concentrating on two relatively small points—the right of the Civil Service Union to belong to the T.U.C., and the right of municipalities to make Trade Union membership a condition of employment. On these two questions the Tory party machine is now being asked to agree to the Act being amended. But is it really sound policy to press for these two secondary changes at the cost of weakening the case for getting rid of the rest of the Act? The main clauses embody (1) an ambigious definition of "illegal" strikes, which opens the door wide to judge-made law; (2) an extraordinarily embracing definition of illegal picketing, to which the same objection applies; and (3) a system of regulating Trade Union expenditure on politics which was manifestly designed to cripple the Labour Party financially to the advantage of the Tories. All these clauses are thoroughly objectionable; and I hope Trade Unionists will not sit down quietly under a Tory decision to keep them in force despite the presence of Labour in the Government. The Labour Ministers may feel unable to kick up a fuss; but Trade Unionists are fully entitled to do so, and I hope they will.

* * *

The T.U.C.'s report made a very poor showing on colonial labour, with short references to help given to unions in British Guiana and Jamaica, an apparent misapprehension of the Copper Belt Report, and a formal welcome to technicians from India and Jamaica. The T.U.C. seems to forget that the vast majority of the British working-class population does not inhabit these islands, nor share our colour. Their conditions of work and standards of living are desperately in need of improvement. The Colonial Office is starting plans to that end, in the midst of war. And the industrial aristocracy of T.U.C. members might reflect, even from the point of view of plain self-interest, that upon the increased consuming power of their colonial fellows depends much of the market for their own production.

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At long last, the Ministry of Supply (*not*, be it noted, the Ministry of Labour) has instituted mobile squads of highly skilled workers who can be sent round to get production properly started in new factories. This ought to have been done long ago. All the plans for it were ready more than a year ago, and the case for doing it was already overwhelming as the big Royal Ordnance factories began to reach completion. But somebody then sat on the scheme, and it has taken a year more of chaos and unnecessary delays in production to get it started. Better late than never; but why wasn't this obvious piece of commonsense organisation carried through as soon as the nature of the problem of getting the new factories properly staffed and started had become plain?

MOSCOW—WASHINGTON

MR. CHURCHILL is never at a loss for words that convey his meaning. His problem in Tuesday's debate in the House of Commons was to put in true perspective the significance of Russia's fight and America's friendship. He made it clear that he fully realises the significance of the Red Army's resistance and the urgency of its claim to all the supplies that we and the Americans can send it. But he did not succeed in dissipating the anxiety with which most of our nation watches the incomprehensible delay in the departure of the promised Anglo-American Mission to Moscow. The explanation, for all we know, may be innocent and technical, and it is fair to remember that supplies are not held up by the failure to appoint or despatch the Beaverbrook-Harriman Mission. We know that the British Government does mean business and that the aid now promised is to be on a more generous scale. But inevitably our memories go back to the summer of 1939, when the same maddening delays, which certainly were not accidental, held up the negotiations for a pact between London and Paris and Moscow, poisoned the atmosphere when at last the talks began, and made von Ribbentrop's task of seduction needlessly easy. During that critical summer the Chamberlain-Halifax combination, ably seconded by saboteurs in the services, would delay for weeks its answer to a Russian note, and when at last its mission, consisting of relatively junior officers, did set out for Moscow, it travelled on a slow ship instead of by air. But these parallels are only too numerous and, we believe, now misleading. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, in his almost equally unfortunate dealings in Russia, had always at his elbow an infallible expert who had assured him that the Soviet regime was about to collapse within a month. Happily, Mr. Churchill is unlikely to listen to the prophets who surrounded Labour's first premier, but their successors are still entrenched in high places and they seem to have diffused around them a view of Russia's military power and prospects as pessimistic and misleading as the atmosphere of delusion that hung over Lossiemouth. What these defeatists feel about Russia is important, because it may affect our preparations in the military field, no less than the despatch of missions and supplies. There is no need to underline the distress and regret that most of this Nor is the public wholly convinced that it is technically impossible to relieve the pressure on our ally by large-scale raids in the West this autumn. If we are not ready now against a fraction of Hitler's army, shall we be in better case next spring?

There are, however, other reasons, neither surprising nor discreditable, that account for the slowness, alike of London and Washington, to adjust themselves to the startling new fact of Russia's involuntary entry into the war. During two years we had regarded her as a somewhat hostile neutral. During twelve months of unprecedented peril, while we stood alone, all our hopes had been fixed on America. She alone sustained us with her sympathy and her supplies, and we watched with hopeful patience her gradual progress from neutrality to an indefinable status only just short of belligerency. Most of us expected that she would soon "come in." In any event, we all foresaw that when at last Hitler's power was broken, she with her matchless economic resources and the greatest navy in the world would join us in shaping the peace and guiding the new world order. What institutional framework it might one day evolve few of us could guess, nor were we over-curious about it. The concrete fact, as most of us and the Americans saw it, was that a fully armed British Empire and American Republic would together for several years wield a quasi-monopoly of world-power, as we hoped for disinterested ends, over a disarmed enemy and an exhausted Europe. This vision of a benevolent hegemony of the English-speaking Powers culminated in the Atlantic Charter. Its actual wording may not explicitly bear this interpretation, but the fact remains that it was drafted at a meeting at which no representative of Russia was present and that the political and ethical outlook it reflected was unmistakably Anglo-American. The audible silence about Russia in Mr. Mackenzie King's recent

broadcast is only one of several proofs that neither half of this English-speaking partnership has yet begun to make the necessary adjustment. In the meanwhile, behind the curtain of propaganda we can only guess at the reactions of the Russians. "What!" they might well say, "these Americans, who have not yet declared war, nor spilled a drop of American blood, are to dictate the world's future? The British at least are masters at sea and may one day win mastery in the air, but on land what have they done?" And then this Russian comment might go on to contrast with the puny scale of our efforts on land, their sufferings, their sacrifices, their exploits. In our failure as yet to revise our outlook, we have lapsed into an unimaginative tactlessness which might, unless we can correct it, bedevil not only our relations with Moscow, but the prospect of a good settlement as well.

The danger, as we see it, is chiefly that the Russians and other Europeans also may come to fear what a very few among us may actually contemplate—an abuse of economic power, and specifically of American power. It is intended that if and when our armies are able to liberate the submerged peoples of Europe, they shall bring with them stocks of American foods and raw materials, with which they will succour the starving masses and set them to work to repair the devastation and start normal industry anew. We could ask for nothing better. But will all this help, which may have to be prolonged for several years, be unconditional? After the last war, throughout Central Europe, in somewhat different ways in Berlin, Vienna and Budapest, American lard and wheat was the bargaining counter which staved off social change and kept capitalism intact. Every trainload of food that went to the stunted children of Central Europe crossed its frontiers subject to the condition, tacit or expressed, that its "pink" governments should touch none of the keystones of economic power. The timid and hybrid system that resulted, neither Liberal nor Socialist, did indeed fend off Bolshevism, but only to pave the way for Fascism. The third article of the Atlantic Charter promises that peoples shall choose their own form of government. But is it certain that they will receive all the good food they may need if they should choose a form unpopular in Washington or London? The way to answer that question and many like it is to bring the Russians into our political counsels from the start. They are allies who are winning their voice and their vote by unexampled sacrifices.

WHITEHALL AND THE FUTURE

ONE of the outstanding features of the last war was the way in which the Civil Service of this country measured up to the demands of the crisis. It will be difficult to pass a similar judgment when the present war is over. There is, of course, no single reason for this difference; it is a function of a wide variety of causes which reach deep into the heart of our governmental and social system. The one thing that is certain is that the post-war world will call for adjustments in our administrative technique at least as far-reaching as those which reformed the Service nearly three-quarters of a century ago.

In a profoundly interesting pamphlet P.E.P.* has analysed the causes of the present position. Mainly, its report argues that we are using the mechanism built for a negative conception of government to cope with the problems of a society which needs a positive conception if they are to be solved. It lays emphasis upon the barren virtues of Treasury control, the inadequate use of modern methods, the over-great reliance upon recruitment by written examination, the lack of an effective relation between the official and the constituency he is supposed to serve. It calls for a thorough revision of the foundation of the system; though it recognises that any full reforms will take a decade or two to complete.

No one can have had any direct experience of the Civil Service in these last two years without agreeing to a large part of this indictment. Our officials remain detached and incorruptible; and it is not necessary to doubt that these are very great virtues in any bureaucracy. Nor have they developed either that greedy appetite for power or that sense of being a race apart from their fellow-citizens which have been the vices of continental bureaucracies. If our Foreign Office retains its historic aloofness, it is surpassed in this by the American State Department.

Yet it is permissible to doubt whether the defects of organisation upon which the P.E.P. report rightly lays emphasis tell the whole of the story. The defects of the Service in the war years have been, primarily, defects of character. There has been a lack of imagination and audacity, an unwillingness to take the risks of innovation, when the times called for these qualities. The departments have known how to construct a powerful case against doing anything; they have rarely shown zeal for decisive experiment. They have been silent before powerful interests. They have shown a tragic unwillingness to accept new responsibilities. Even where they have built organs of public consultation, they have rarely had the courage to put them to effective use. The contrast between Sir Arthur Salter's high hopes of the advisory committee in 1919 and the actuality of 1941 is lamentable.

Part, at any rate, of the explanation lies in the contrast between the years which preceded 1914 and those which preceded 1939. In the first period there had been eight years of active government during which a body of able young officials, mainly inspired by Sir Robert Morant, had become accustomed to experiment in the grand manner. It was in that spirit that they confronted the problems of war. In 1939, there had not only been the grim years of appeasement, but a record in the field of social and economic matters in which timidity was a virtue and innovation a horror from which every sound official was taught to shrink. This was the temper communicated to the Service by Ministers, and it was a temper which put control in the hands of men who, by 1939, had grown to think of experiment as wholly alien from the function they performed.

Something, too, is due to the narrowness of the area from which the administrative class is drawn. With few exceptions, it was the preserve of the middle and upper classes; if a young man from the clerical or executive class found his way there it was because, like Sir Horace Wilson, he reflected more fully the negativism that was looked for than even its historic exponents professed to accept. The unstated assumptions of most of the Departments were in keeping with the prevailing temper of British government in the inter-war years. The permissible boundaries of state-intervention had been reached. New experiments would be economically unsound and administratively unwise. The Service was, on the whole, satisfied and complacent. Great action would have disturbed the even tenor of its way. Anyone who reads the official evidence of the Treasury before the Tomlin Commission will see how little the Heads of Departments had any sense that a new world was being made before their eyes. Nor would they have thought its implications desirable had they recognised them. Their inner, though unexpressed, assumption was the desirability of maintaining that middle-class civilisation of which the triumph in 1918 was so overwhelming.

They believed that this triumph was permanent. They had little knowledge of democracy as a dynamic thing, and they were dubious of it where they suspected it. That is why their willingness to take risks, even their accumulation of that material upon which the knowledge of the limits of the risk may be assessed, is so barren. That is why, also, in a period of such intense strain, mass-unemployment, the distressed areas, the problem of the mines, the impact of their influence was always towards the *status quo*. Anyone who compares their record in these years with that of the young men whom President Roosevelt gathered about him in Washington can hardly fail to note an absence in London of the energy and enthusiasm engendered by the New Deal. Even the intelligence work of Whitehall lacks the drive and the range of that achieved in Washington.

It is not a defence to say, as the official mind likes to insist, that policy-making is a matter for Ministers; the Civil Servant's duty is to carry out the orders he receives. The answer is that, granted the area of a modern Government Department, only a very exceptional Minister can control any but the largest of its functions. All but the apprentice in administration are, in fact, making decisions which have a vital impact on men's lives; and it remains as true to-day as it was a century ago that, as Sir Henry Taylor said, "He who executes measures is in very truth the master of them." Since 1919 the direction of our Civil Service has lacked both the capacity to see the problems before it in their full proportion, and the courage to tackle them with resolution. They have shrunk from facing the unpleasant. They have yielded to the powerful what they have denied to the helpless. They have been satisfied with purposes and standards that are inadequate to the issues we confront. The impetus of Benthamism gave us, with the reforms of 1870, an admirable instrument for the *laisser-faire* state. Now that we have moved into a society which will live or die in proportion to its capacity to plan, we need administrative expedients on a scale far wider than the present direction of the Service appears to be aware. It is important, above all for the Labour Party, to remember that every great impetus to administrative reform has, in the past, come from outside the Service. On its record so far in this war, it does not seem likely that the source of renovation will be different in the future.

H. J. LASKI

* *The Machinery of Government*, 1. The Civil Service, P.E.P., Queen Anne's Gate.

A LONDON DIARY

Two opinions are possible about the lines our propaganda to America should follow, but the one thing that is unpardonable is to allow our efforts to drop entirely out of the news. That, as a friend who recently returned from the States, tells me, had pretty well happened during the six weeks that elapsed between Hitler's assault on Russia and the Churchill-Roosevelt meeting. Presumably England still existed, but there was little to remind Americans of that fact. Of the Battle of the Atlantic, in particular, there was rarely a mention, for the publication of our losses had ceased. We know that sinkings in the North Atlantic are immensely reduced; the stuff that Americans send us gets safely across. It is no longer possible to appeal truthfully to the sympathies of the minority who would rally to us all the more decidedly if we were doing badly. But the average man is more likely to espouse our cause when we are doing well. Then why not tell him, with all the picturesque detail that makes a good journalistic story, the good news of the arrival in our ports of the immense convoys which are now reaching them intact with impressive frequency? Mr. Churchill has a sure instinct for effect; he described the great convoy of 70 to 80 ships which he overtook. Last week, as Brailsford's article is this journal showed, an even bigger convoy arrived. Brief references have now appeared to this in some papers, but no details are allowed to make the story interesting. Surely the arrival in perfect safety of something over 80 ships with several million tons of munitions and food in their holds was a piece of news incomparably more important than most of the dog-fights in the air that are described at tedious length? We tested the censorship ourselves: something we were allowed to say, but the picturesque details that make a good story had to come out; sundry natural phenomena which we wished to mention would have enabled the enemy to guess that convoy's route. From a military standpoint the censor was in the right. But are the Germans really in ignorance about the route adopted? And even if they were, would not the political effect, alike on our own people and the Americans, justify some risk of adding to his knowledge—after the event? For the time being—thanks largely to Russia—the Battle of the Atlantic is being won. Surely that fact should be proclaimed with all the visual detail that makes a story readable and convincing?

* * *

A Labour candidate told me to-day that he addressed a meeting of shop stewards in an important arms centre. He had with him a foreign socialist who is one of Britain's best friends. He discussed with the shop stewards the problems involved in sending aid to Russia. He found them fully aware of the difficulties and wholly intent on the task of increasing production. They had left off talking in ideological terms—though they would have done nothing else a couple of months ago. They had no time, they said, to attack capitalism, inefficient though it was. They weighed up the factors that held up production; how far they could influence the employer, goad the foreman and encourage the workers. They were desperately keen; their part was to produce for Russia and Britain. How far people are from realising, my friend remarked, what a catastrophic effect on production the collapse of Russia would have had. As they left the meeting his Continental friend turned to him and said: "Now for the first time in England I am confident. That was the people speaking."

* * *

With a spirit like this abroad, conferences and meetings of one sort and another to promote understanding and aid for the U.S.S.R. are readily arranged all over the country. But there is sometimes a snag about these arrangements. We cannot easily go back to the days of the Popular Front. Memories of the Communist change of front and its defeatist phase are strong; many people who were willing to go on to platforms with Communists during the Spanish war are now afraid of being politically exploited. We are all a little shy of the enthusiastic organiser who comes round pretending not to be a Communist, though we know well enough that a party, or at least a Fellow Traveller's, ticket is lying in his or her bag. It is fatal to leave the organisation to the Party: the result of uncritical enthusiasm, founded on carefully selected facts or often quite untrue pictures, can only once again be a reaction which will be disastrous to good relations with the U.S.S.R. Even at the excellent exhibition arranged by the S.C.R. the advertised speakers were all well known on Communist platforms, while no literature is sold on these occasions except Party literature, which is no use to people who want an honest portrait of Russia with the pimples on the face. One result is a dangerous tendency, which is disguised just now by the patriotic necessity of collaboration with Russia, for politically-conscious England to divide into two idealogical camps—the Anglo-American and the Anglo-Russian. The dangers here for the future, national and international, are only too obvious.

* * *

For these reasons I welcome the new Committee on Anglo-Soviet relations of which Lord Horder is the President, with Philips Price, M.P., Prof. A. V. Hill and Victor Gollancz on the executive. Its first job should be to try to improve communications with Russia. If this Committee can get better contacts going, if it can obtain accurate information about the U.S.S.R. and spread it here, and at the same time—even more difficult—spread information about Britain and the West in Russia, it will do invaluable service. In Russia young Communists have been brought up to believe that in the capitalist world the streets run with the blood of workers bludgeoned by brutal police (which is really a very rare occurrence except in some big business areas in the U.S.); it is hard to convince Russians that in England, too, there are workers' institutions, crêches and libraries. In Russia, not long ago, one friend of mine showed a photograph of the Peckham Health Centre. He could not persuade any Russian he met that this was not a photograph of a Russian institution. They thought he was lying; nothing of the sort existed in the capitalist world! In England ignorance of Russia is also great, and as Russia fights there is a great deal of feeling among workers that they have been deceived about Soviet progress. How many people have followed, for instance, the progress of education, the immense job of abolishing illiteracy in that vast primitive population, and understood how, for defence reasons, Bolshevik education took on a more national twist? But that is only part of the story. Surely we ought to know what explanation official Russia advances to explain a recent development—charging fees which the worker can seldom afford, for education beyond the primary school. This charge seems to violate the Soviet Constitution, and to be an effort to establish an hereditary bureaucracy in Russia. In any case, we need a candid account of developments; the great danger is the 100 per cent. Communist propaganda on the one side and the 100 per cent. contemptuous ignorance on the other.

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The best thing about the Tagore Memorial meeting on September 5th was that it was so little a "memorial." It was an international gathering, oddly gay and harmonious. There were no political speeches. Far better, there was a unity of feeling. Representatives of many nations were present, India, Britain, Russia (M. Maisky's speech was a model of effective brevity), China (Dr. Wellington Koo), and the United States (Miss Helen Kirkpatrick spoke excellently), while, unexpectedly, Señor Negrin was discovered modestly sitting at the back of the hall and brought on to the platform. Beatrix Lehman's remarkable voice made the best of several of Tagore's poems, which are never, I think, very effective in English, and his songs, sung by a Hindu choir, sounded not with "the melancholy of the East," but with the fervour of an awakened people. The speech I liked best was that of Hsaio Ch'ien, a Chinese poet who combined wit with a disarming knowledge of Tagore's influence on young China. A memorial book on Tagore, published by the India League, was on hand; it wisely leaves it to Tagore to tell in half a dozen of his speeches and letters how he began with a love for England and a confidence in her promises which ended with Amritsar, when he wrote rejecting his knighthood; how he saw the meaning of the Manchurian, Abyssinian and Spanish wars and ultimately reached the conclusion that the hope for the East lay with the Soviet Union. Edward Thompson, who was an admirable chairman, told us a lot of interesting and some candid things about Tagore, whom he knew well. As he talked Tagore ceased to be a legendary figure with a beard and became a highly interesting and original human being.

* * *

From the experience of a woman friend who has just had a baby I gather that war and the Limitation of Supplies Act have not so far interfered with the postal exploitation of those who are thus blessed by Providence and who announce the fact (thus giving an impression of at least comfortable means) in the columns of the *Times*. Within 48 hours of the announcement my friend had received five letters from (obviously professional) begging-letter writers, three singularly impertinent circulars, with a "You Have Been Warned" flavour,

from vendors of contraceptives, four sets of sample post-cards illustrated with a nauseatingly sentimental decor of storks and gooseberry bushes with the correct place-name and data for use in replying to "kind inquiries," plus a dozen or more appeals for funds from reputable maternity hospitals all over the country. Being a sensible woman, my friend promptly consigned to the waste-paper basket all but the hospitals appeal letters. These, couched in terms dreadfully appealing to the possessor of a successful baby, she handed over, with a tear or two, to her husband who happens to be a temporary officer in the army, serving on less than one-third of his pre-war earnings. How far he responded financially to the appeals is his business, not mine. I would merely ask whether the treasurers of hospitals, hard-pressed though they may be under the present (utterly indefensible) voluntary system, think it quite "cricket" to try to make capital out of the sense of relief, the physical weakness and the general lack of what advertising agents call "consumer resistance" experienced by women who have just given birth to a child?

* * *

Moving staircases have always seemed to me foolproof. I was mistaken. The other day I was going up a closely packed escalator when at the top I suddenly felt a jam just in front of me. I was thrown forward, recovered my balance and looked back. A woman was apparently unable to get off the escalator. Of course she fell down and the others behind her, automatically pushed upwards, fell in layers on the top of her. In a few seconds the ground was covered with screaming women, some on their faces and some with their legs in the air. Fresh deposits of people trampled or fell on the top of them. As we pulled them out a new lot of legs and bodies became entangled in the heap of bodies. It only lasted a few seconds and no one was seriously hurt, because the porters switched off the power and stopped the staircase, but half a minute was time enough to see how quickly panic can spring out of nothing in a mechanical age.

* * *

Pourqoi dit-on: "La France est occupée"?
Parceque le Boche est dans le cabinet. CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of this column goes this week to R. M. Fairley.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

It is impossible to forecast with definite accuracy the future course of the war—now started on its third year—for the good and sufficient reason that its course will be dictated by the successes and victories of one side or the other.—Sir Hubert Gough in *Glasgow Daily Record.*

Karl Marx lived in London, and, being sincerely averse from doing an honest day's work, wrote articles denouncing capitalism. . . . He lives now only in the minds of adolescent theorists, who imagine that men can be seduced from patriotism and love of country by a windy dream of a new world built on universal destruction.—Beverley Baxter, M.P., in the *Evening Chronicle.*

PAINT 'EM RED!—I read that Whitehall girls are to give a bare leg lead to the women of Britain. They might do worse than paint their bare legs red. This would be a tribute to the gallant Red Army which has saved their skins even though they lose their stockings.—Correspondent in *Reynolds.*

There is no perfect solution, he declared, but it is surely important that every attempt should be made to escape disturbing the confidence the worker has in the equity of the economic system.—Sir Walter Citrine reported in the *News Chronicle.*

Who dare deny that the voice of Winston Churchill was the voice of God. Always in the past—and indeed in no other way—could the Almighty (Who gave His Son for the redemption of mankind) speak words of encouragement, cheer, and hope to the peoples of the world. No other man has a record that so fits him to be the mouthpiece of Divinity.—Correspondent in *Hertfordshire Mercury.*

Dive-bombers, it would appear from evidence I have been able to collect from various sources, have no frightening effect on Russian troops, who manage to deal faithfully with them in that unconcerned, rather genial manner with which they perform all tasks.—*News Chronicle.*

Like other members of the committee, he had thought they were rendering public service, but apparently the result was going to be that instead of blame being put in the proper quarter he and those associated with him were going to be crucified. He did not think it was quite fair.—*Burnley Express and News.*

FROM THE TECHNICIAN'S POINT OF VIEW

[This article is written by a Chemist in a Government explosives factory who for obvious reasons cannot reveal his name.]

AFTER four years' industrial experience and two years' science teaching, I joined a Government munition works as a shift chemist. There is a slight possibility of the buildings blowing up or catching fire, so they are dotted about at a safe distance from each other. The surroundings are, for these reasons, still quite pleasant. We are in the centre of a rural district and the workers come by buses from towns and villages within a radius of thirty miles. I am one of a number of chemists in control of all three shifts. Of these some are peacetime science masters of approximately my own age (28), three are younger and went straight from university into the explosives industry, and two are middle-aged men from other trades. We are all being paid slightly more than we received in peacetime; we work on eight-hour shifts, one week on each, Saturday and Sunday included, and have one day off in seven, which we can arrange to suit ourselves provided no more than three are absent at one time. Thus from a personal point of view we have nothing to grumble about.

What does distress some of us deeply, however, is our lack of opportunity to use effectively our combined brain power and experience to the best advantage for winning the war. The factory is organised on dictatorial lines. The Chemist-in-Charge of the section rests on his reputation as an explosive chemist in the last war. He writes instructions in a book which the shift chemist reads at the beginning of his shift, and is expected to carry out without question. The shift chemist hardly ever sees the C/C, and he has little opportunity for discussing things with his colleagues on the other shifts. The C/C seldom leaves the confines of his office, and he is never in the section in the evening or at night. Consequently his instructions often betray a lack of knowledge of the state of affairs on the plant, and, as he has little understanding of human nature, the execution of his orders sometimes leads to discontent among the workers. For example, it was brought to his notice that a quantity of faulty material had left a department under my charge. When I came on shift I found a notice nailed on the wall informing the operatives that the production of a certain number of defective articles would automatically reduce the offender to a lower rate of pay. As neither shift chemists, foremen, charge hands nor girl-operatives had received any previous warning, there was a great deal of ill-feeling, amounting almost to a strike. I therefore removed the offending notice and wrote a report explaining my action. The C/C ordered me to replace it, and only after collecting statistics and wasting a great deal of valuable time did I finally convince him that the execution of his order was most unwise.

The safety regulations are, of necessity, very strict, and smoking is an offence leading to immediate dismissal. On Saturday and Sunday the men work twelve-hour instead of eight-hour shifts. On these occasions the custom has been to allow them outside the gates for ten minutes at meal time in order to have a smoke. The C/C came in one Sunday and put a stop to this practice, with the result that the men all clocked off and went *home* to have their smoke, and the whole factory came to a standstill for four hours, with a loss in production amounting to £1,200.

The attitude to production of the C/C and of the management to whom he is responsible is extremely short-sighted. We are continually having our weekly shift production figures for the various departments compared without consideration being given to the quality of the labour employed. As we are taking on new girls, and they may all be put on the same shift, it is obviously absurd to compare production in this way. Indeed, most of us who have some teaching experience are agreed that much better results would be achieved over the next four months if the production drive were postponed until the new labour learned the job. At present the foreman urges on the charge hands, and the charge hands urge on the girls, and as most of the girls are entirely new to factory life and naturally unsure of their capacity, the result is greater nervousness and sometimes rebelliousness.

A committee consisting of the present shift chemists, with the C/C as chairman, would be a most satisfactory body for dealing both with technical and labour problems. The C/C and the other explosive chemists would contribute their technical experience and the schoolmasters their knowledge of learning capacity and human nature in general. Furthermore, the management would be compelled to pay attention to the joint demands of university graduates.

Let me illustrate by one or two non-technical points:

The factory was built from plans designed for the last war, when

blacking-out was unnecessary. Consequently, at night, the ventilation in the blacked-out buildings is so bad that in one night eleven girls fainted and many more were ill. Repeated reports have been made by shift chemists, but nothing has been done in the matter.

Before starting work all process workers change into non-inflammable clothing provided. This was also designed for the last war, and is extremely coarse and heavy. I am confident that there would be less risk of accident if the girls were dressed in a less Victorian costume. A new design of safety clothing is urgently called for.

Canteens have been provided, but they have been built to serve as air-raid shelters as well. The ventilation is even worse than in the factory. Consequently there is no place where a worker may rest in comfort, and it is forbidden to eat or sit outside in the fresh air. The catering is carried out by a private firm and meals cost 1*s.* 2*d.*, which seems to me a profitable figure as all overheads are paid by the Ministry of Supply. It is possible to obtain a large plateful of meat and potatoes and rice or boiled pudding at 2 a.m. on a hot summer night, but no provision is made for people who have listened to Lord Woolton's advice and want brown bread, cheese and salad. The catering staff are paid 30*s.* per week and the process workers 45*s.* to 55*s.* Consequently there is a quick transfer to factory work, and an efficient and contented catering staff will never be obtained. Domestic science teachers and dietitians should be conscripted to run the catering on modern scientific lines for the benefit of the workers—not for private profit.

Women have one day off in eight and men no time off at all. The women are on seven rotas which change shift on different days, and one day later each week. The men change shift on Sunday. Consequently the women are always moving on to other shifts and working under different chemists, foremen and charge hands, with strange companions who are on other rotas. This is obviously bad for production as no one works at her best among a strange crowd, and the charge hands do not know the capacities of the girls who have learnt the job on another shift. Both men and women should have one day off in eight, and it could easily be arranged that the same people always worked together in the same buildings on the same machines. How can we convince the management of the loss involved and the disharmony due to the continual changes in personnel?

Another source of discontent is the inefficiency of the wages department. Sometimes as many as 20 per cent. of the workers are paid amounts which are less than they are entitled to. One girl confided to me that she dreaded the arrival of Friday because her wages were always wrong and people thought she was no good when she came home with less money than the other girls. A great many hours are wasted rectifying these mistakes. Sometimes workers refuse to start until the correct money is received. Repeated shift chemist reports are made, but the inefficiencies of the bookkeepers are glossed over again and again.

Some of the male labour is also very unsatisfactory for the purpose for which it is required. Before the factory opened, numbers of the local unemployed were taken on and sent to another factory to train. When they returned, foremen and charge hands were chosen from amongst their number and some of them have turned out rather badly. They tend to bully the girls or to be too familiar with them. Surely the Ministry of Labour can supply some trained foremen from luxury trades which are closing down or from blitzed factories in cities. Or the problem could be successfully solved by conscripting educated women who would quickly learn the new work and be better able to deal with the girls than rough, inexperienced men. The management does not realise that the labour conditions in this war are entirely different from those in the last. We are employing a new generation of young women, better educated and benefiting from the mass production of pretty clothes and silk stockings, influenced by the films and the radio. You cannot order these people about like ignorant African negroes. These are the girls Mr. Churchill saw standing in queues for overcrowded buses last November as he drove through blitzed London. They are good stuff, but they will not be bullied. Welfare supervisors with university diplomas in Social Science should be employed to look after their needs and voice their grievances. They should be made to feel a personal interest in production. They should be shown round other parts of the factory so that they may understand the purpose of their own little monotonous task, and the reason why it must always be done in this particular way and never in that. They should have a chance to meet socially. In short, we should all have a little of what we are fighting for *now*—namely, democracy.

IRELAND TO-DAY

[We print this article by an acknowledged authority on Anglo-Irish affairs, without necessarily endorsing all his opinions. Mr. Pakenham is the author of *Peace by Ordeal*, which is the standard work on the Treaty of 1921.]

BEFORE, during and after the Anglo-Irish negotiations of 1938, Mr. de Valera laid far more emphasis on Partition than on all other issues combined. Again and again he insisted that until this final barrier was removed all talk of complete Anglo-Irish reconciliation was wishful thinking. And he predicted, in accents more sober than those employed by some of us, but none the less unmistakable in their warning, the kind of Irish situation that would arise in the event of a British war. I have returned from a tour of Ireland deeply conscious that he has proved a true prophet.

So long as Ireland remains partitioned and—a not quite inevitable corollary—the Nationalist minority in the Six Counties continue to be discriminated against in defiance of all British democratic principles, the most seductive Englishman will fail to convince the most amenable Irishman that the Allies are fighting "against aggression" and "on behalf of Democracy." The British cause, to Irishmen, is simply the patriotic cause of Britain, in which certain other countries have become involuntarily caught up through German invasion. It is not a cause whose nobility or whose claim on British lives Irishmen would dream of questioning. Nor do they criticise those of their own number, a considerable and growing band, who cross the border to enlist in the British Forces. But it is not a cause for which one Irish parent in a hundred will send his son to die; or one Irish voter in a hundred consent to plunge his country in war. While Partition and the discrimination against the Northern Nationalists continue, the struggle of the Allies, however heroically conducted, however wide a measure of sympathy it extracts, however vast its incidental benefits to civilisation, will seem to Irishmen a war whose motive is national interest. Ireland will accordingly weigh her own response in terms of her own legitimate self-interest, not in those of altruism, let alone quixotry.

That is not quite the whole story. England's international ideals, the question whether she intends to introduce a new code into international relationships, will be primarily judged in Ireland on British handling of Six County affairs. But in a broader sphere Ireland, under Mr. Cosgrave, and, still more strikingly under Mr. de Valera, flung all her energies behind the Geneva experiment. She saw in the League the hope of a world order where international altruism would find an increasing place, and where small nations would acquire a measure of responsibility for international developments. Through the decision, as Irishmen see it, of the Great Powers, including England, against such a system, the world has been thrown back into the old international anarchy where great wars are made by Great Powers; suffered, or if possible avoided, by small ones.

I must leave to English readers to decide how far an idealistic transformation of British Imperial policy either in general or in special relation to the Six Counties is desirable, possible, or likely during the next few months or years. It would be an affectation to pretend that such a contingency is anticipated in Ireland as an immediate possibility. At the moment Ireland is concerned to argue that the relations between the two countries should be guided in practice by mutual good-humoured self-interest, with everything reasonable done to remove unnecessary causes of friction and suspicion.

Viewed against this background the outstanding impressions brought back to England are two. An impression first of a hardened and now inflexible Irish resolve to defend Neutrality against violation from any quarter. Ireland, of course, has no illusions as to the extent of her material resources. But if there is one sentence which it is the bounden duty of every returning traveller to pen, it is this: Any attempt by anyone to seize the ports (or the air facilities, now more in the limelight) would be resisted by a united Eire to the death.

The second impression derived from all parts of Ireland is of a friendliness towards England greater than any I can recall in my lifetime. Englishmen who do not know Ireland may find it difficult to fit these two impressions together. If you mention Irish friendliness a look of dawning hope comes into their eyes. "Any chance of the ports?" rises the unspoken question. Alternatively, if you stress the dead refusal on that point, they shake their heads and mutter something knowingly about the German Legation (in actual fact a negligible influence on opinion). The simple truth is as I have described it. The overwhelming majority of the population desire a British victory. Figures from 60 per cent. to 85 per cent. are mentioned. But the people are not content to be divided into pro-British and pro-German. They take pride in standing together 100 per cent. pro-Irish.

Assume, what would not be unanimously conceded, that a British victory represents an Irish interest. Nevertheless, the hypothetical contribution to victory accruing from Irish participation in the war is reckoned small against the certain sufferings awaiting the Irish people in that event. Which brings one to Ireland's unprotected condition, and her main contention at the present time—that she be given opportunity to purchase arms.

On this topic one must take care to avoid over-statement. No neutral country, itself unable to manufacture armaments, possesses any inherent right to buy arms from belligerents such as England, or belligerent arsenals such as America, except in so far as those countries have arms to spare. In the early months of the war the matter was handled as one of relative priorities, which in theory at least gave Ireland little cause to complain. More recently, however, President Roosevelt, in a statement which Americans believe has been widely misunderstood, introduced what seemed to Irishmen a political reason for withholding weapons that would otherwise be available for Ireland. He was understood to assert that Ireland could not be supplied with arms in view of her Government's failure to give undertakings that a German attack would be resisted. This pronouncement, whatever its alleged verbal accuracy, is so flagrantly in disregard of Mr. de Valera's repeated public declarations that its effect on Irish opinion has been lamentable. Believing as I do that America holds the key to much that must otherwise prove insoluble in the future of Anglo-Irish relations, I record with sorrow the feeling of undisguised irritation towards the American Government that I encountered among intelligent unofficial Irishmen at every turn on this visit. However pure in motive the fact must be faced that America in her Irish initiative has made a thoroughly unsuccessful though, of course, far from irretrievable start.

Surely in this matter of arms, whether they are to come from Britain or America, it is childish to try to get the best of both worlds, to keep something in reserve in case after all " the ports have to be seized." I am not going to argue here what seems the crushing case, alike on moral, strategic, or even on propagandist grounds, against such a " march through Belgium " in any circumstances, however desperate. The British Government obviously dislikes the idea, and have no doubt relegated such a breach of international law to the category of extreme remedies which they hope never to use. Cannot they in that case treat Irish arms requirements on exactly the same footing as those that would be put forward by British troops performing the strategic tasks in question? Surely from the angle of defending this island from a German lodgment in Ireland a high degree of strategic priority attaches to the defence of the Irish ports, aerodromes, chief cities, etc., tasks now being performed by an Irish army badly in need of equipment.

Be that as it may, let the matter be treated as a technical problem of defending the two islands, and presented to the Irish as such. Irish suspicions that a squeeze—" we are keeping those arms till you give us those ports "—have been raised to a high pitch since President Roosevelt's utterance. They could be rapidly allayed by the policy mentioned, one recommended not in justice to Ireland so much as in the interests of British security. An accompanying declaration should disclaim any intention of violating Irish neutrality. Do not the better reports from the Atlantic render this moment propitious?

So much for Lord Cranborne's task at the Dominions Office. It is lightened by the presence of Sir John Maffey as British Representative in Dublin; the office and the man have both fully justified themselves. On the other hand, the Dominions Secretary unfortunately lacks control over such aspects of British policy towards Ireland as fall under Lord Woolton, and in the case of the Six Counties, Mr. Herbert Morrison. *Prima facie* Lord Woolton hardly seems to have secured the maximum potential imports from Ireland of cattle (foot-and-mouth disease apart), sheep, pigs, bacon, butter, cheese, or eggs. His disciples insist that England can buy in a cheaper market by relying on the Dominions. To which Irishmen reply by enquiring whether the extra convoy costs from the Dominions have been taken into this reckoning. The Irish ask for prices more nearly akin than at present to those paid to the farmers of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. They may well arouse the interest of the British housewife, if she can be got to believe that her dietary could be substantially expanded by the extra supplies that the higher prices would evoke from Ireland. The Ministry of Food officials assure her, however, that she has little to gain that way. These matters are constantly under investigation by rival experts. Here as elsewhere the British case, if it be watertight, should be capable of presentation so as to remove the suspicions of reasonable Irishmen that political designs are interfering with sound economics.

It is disturbing for those whose English sympathies are Labour to find the complete indifference in Ireland concerning the party labels attached to British politicians. Mr. Morrison earned a slice of precarious popularity with the Orangemen on the occasion of his visit to the North. One sentence, properly emphasised, to the effect that while he was Home Secretary all creeds in Northern Ireland would receive equal treatment, just as in England, Scotland and Wales, would capture the imagination of Irishmen more than any pronouncement a British Minister could utter. Mr. Morrison should begin by exploring the peculiar character of his responsibility for the Six County regime, a regime which the Speaker of the Imperial Parliament has refused to allow Parliament to examine, although it owes its existence to British bayonets and finance. So long as Partition remains, the logical step would be to transfer Six County affairs to the jurisdiction of the Dominions Office where they could at least be handled in line with a general Irish perspective. So staunch an anti-Fascist as Mr. Morrison owes it to his principles to render the change unnecessary.

One word about Mr. Churchill. No Englishman is credited with less friendly feelings or more dangerous potentialities towards Mr. de Valera's Ireland. But Mr. Churchill if he brought himself to study the Ireland of to-day would find plenty of the quality inherent in such men as Collins, O'Higgins, or earlier, Kettle, which he so generously and wisely romanticised. And Ireland in her turn appreciates big personalties, and is ready to respect England the more for being led by such a one.

It would be tempting to end by announcing a bargain or compromise easily attainable with a little good will on both sides. It would be misleading to do so. But there is no need to despair. Irish affairs have on the whole been handled with more restraint and tact in England than I for one anticipated when war broke out, though more than once it has seemed as though one's worst forebodings would be realised. They could be still better handled if England once for all abandoned any idea that every " concession " to Irish needs or sentiment must necessarily represent the loss of a British weapon that might come in useful in an emergency. Irish affairs could, as suggested earlier, be more clearsightedly examined in respect of certain vital Irish requirements. Above all in respect of her claim to purchase arms.

FRANK PAKENHAM

SPRING

THIS generation is Trojan, bound to mourn;
To dream and find a black spot on the sun,
And wake to love, and find the lover gone.

Now all the old transcriptions of delight,
The day's dialectic, the escape at night,
Are out of mind and more than out of sight.

The destination of any weapon is grief.
In countrysides where joy must seem naive
Under a splitting sky our women conceive.

The towns of houses, massed security
Out-marshalled by a later century,
Shudder and creak with a Come-Judgment cry.

The ache of crushed walls when the raid is over.
This is a house, we said, we have built forever:
A two-backed fool, thinking of one day's weather.

Only one primate has to love his error.
Only his intricate heart cannot recover
But glories in illusion when half-cadaver;

Or likes being ill, or nurses grievances,
Or calls a mountain or a forest his,
Or quarrels in five hundred languages.

And man, erect, unvenerable,
A thinking eye so simply vulnerable
That half his history is marginal,

Sighs now across the boulevards of night:
" Give us this day, before it is too late,
Something to love indeed, enough to eat."

KENNETH ALLOTT

SCUM OF THE EARTH

[The two letters which follow form the Epilogue of Arthur Koestler's forthcoming book *Scum of the Earth*, which is to be published on September 19th by Messrs. Jonathan Cape (*7s. 6d.*). Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* was described in this journal (February 8th) as "one of the few books written in this epoch which will survive it." *Scum of the Earth* describes the experience of the author and other refugees who were interned in France at the beginning of the war. He escaped to England in the summer of 1940 and was imprisoned in Pentonville (without any charge being brought against him) for six weeks.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

A. Letter to Colonel Blimp.
B. Letter to Comrade Blump.

A

. . . Thank you for your welcome to this country, which, as you write, "stands like a solid rock of freedom and decency facing the shambles of the Continent." Please excuse the delay in answering your letter, due to certain formalities (six weeks' imprisonment in Pentonville) through which I had to go after my arrival. It did not really matter; we have got into the habit, I and my like. I can assure you that it was the most decent jail I have been in so far; if I should write a Baedeker of the prisons of Europe, I would mark it with three stars.

But the reason why I really did not mind was that all through those nights in Pentonville, in spite of being locked up during the air raids in a pitch-dark, second-floor cell alone, I felt *safe* for the first time since the outbreak of war. I beg you to reflect for an instant on this curious mental phenomenon. For me and my like, "safety" has only one meaning: to share the collective dangers of war and be safe from individual persecution, torture, and the more humiliating forms of death. The Austrian poet Rilke once wrote this prayer: "Lord, I don't ask Thee to let me live my own life, but I beseech Thee, let me die my own death." Amen.

During my stay in Marseilles, after the capitulation, in a country which has reached the bottom of humiliation, on August 15th, at noon, suddenly the air-raid sirens went, after they had been silent for two months. It was only a rehearsal, to prevent the pipes getting rusty, but it gave one a strange, home-sick longing for the good old days of war, when all was not yet lost. I was sitting in a tram and I saw on the faces of the people around me that they had similar thoughts. For a moment they understood that a man might be happier amongst a shower of high-explosives and incendiaries than under the *Pax Swasticana*. For them it was only a question of dignity and bigger food rations; for us it is a question of physical existence.

If you understand this, then you understand perhaps what England means to us. She is the enemy of our enemies; and perhaps one day she may become our ally.

Do not listen to those who pretend that this is already the case; or to those amongst my brother refugees who walk around with leper bells, shouting that the dearest wish of their hearts is to die for the British Empire. They are not lying, but in their distress they have got so muddled that they think Ottawa is on the Continent. No, I and my like do not wish to die for Ottawa, nor for a third Versailles (the first dates from 1871), and the eternisation of the European vendetta; nor for a peace which would be a declaration of war for the next generation. Neither have we any enthusiasm for an economic order which burns the crops which it produces, and reminds one of a certain goose which, instead of golden eggs, lays a time bomb every day and then settles down blissfully to hatch them.

But all this need not disturb you; for in this fight against the common enemy we are tied to you in life and in death. If you perish, we perish, and if our brethren on the Continent do not help you, you will not win.

A strange historical constellation has tied us together, and we are mutually in the position of the Indian bride: if one of us dies, the other will be burnt alive with the corpse, on the great funeral pyre of European civilisation.

Yours truly.

B

DEAR COMRADE BLUMP,—Thank you for your letter of welcome to this country which you call "an abyss of reaction and hypocrisy," a further proof of which you see in the fact of my imprisonment. Unfortunately the proof is no longer valid, as I have been released unconditionally, partly thanks to a letter of guarantee from your cousin, the Colonel, as I have in the meantime been informed.

I must also confess that I have enlisted as a volunteer in the Army, without waiting for the Government to define our war aims. The alternative would have been to follow the example of your step-brother, who refused to handle an Imperialist stirrup pump, whereupon his flat was burnt out by an undialectical incendiary bomb. We have to choose between these alternatives; a third way may exist theoretically, but for all practical purposes there is none.

Of course, I am as unhappy as you are about the fact that our war aims have not yet been defined. Of course, it is ridiculous for us to ask our *Genossen* in Germany to overthrow their rulers without being able to tell them what we propose instead. We both know that a German will not commit high treason (for that is what we ask him to do) for the promise of a bigger butter ration, nor for the sake of non-specified "democracy," which in the memory of the younger generation over there means mainly unemployment plus reparations; and that they prefer to march the goose-step instead of queueing up for the dole. We also know that the German national character is not dominated by sheer wickedness, as your cousin the Colonel believes, but by a sort of aggressive sentimentality, ever since the time of the *Nibelungen*. We know that the whole problem is to fix their political libido on a banner more fascinating than the swastika, and that the only one which would do is the stars and stripes of the European Union. We have to teach them to sing "*Europa, Europa ueber alles*," or they will never keep quiet. Other solutions have been tried during the past twelve centuries since the days of Charlemagne, and never succeeded. If we do not convince your cousin of this, our grandchildren will have to do it during the next war, unless they miss their chance of being born through lack of available parents.

Yes, by victory we imagine something entirely different from your cousin, but for the practical purposes of the moment that does not matter. For we both know that the Germans and other people on the Continent will not revolt before the first signs of military defeat. For the moment our situation reminds one of the story of the slum child, whose mother says to him, while handing him a crust of dry bread: "Imagine there is dripping on it." Whereupon the child asks: "Please, mother, may I imagine marmalade instead?" For the moment we are all still choking on the dry crust of war, and if your cousin prefers to imagine dripping with it, let him. We for our part know it will be marmalade.

By the way, how do you define the difference between our marmalade and the Colonel's dripping? We have seen that a Socialist economy can associate with autocracy (Russia), and that capitalism can be coupled with an efficient planned economy (Germany). I am afraid that in a few years our battle-cry, "Capitalism or Socialism," will have as much bearing on reality as theological disputes about the sex of angels. If, however, we proceed empirically, and extract the tendencies at work in existing régimes, we come to two pairs of alternatives, overlapping our old one.:

In economics: (A) Chaos or (B) Planning (i.e. State Capitalism = State Socialism).

In politics: (1) Autocracy or (2) Democracy (i.e. the rule of the people by representation).

I know that the mark of equation in the brackets after (B) will shock you. But I have not found anybody who could explain to me the difference between State Capitalism and State Socialism in economic terms. The difference lies in the political structure of the State, and is hence implicit in the second alternative.

Now, if we combine A+1 we get the classical form of tyranny, buried for ever by history. The combination B+1 produces totalitarianism, which we reject. The combination A+2 leads to plutocracy, or the goose that lays the time-bombs. Remains B+2, which has not yet been tried, and which seems to be the only promising one. Of course, it cannot be produced in the laboratory. A new movement will have to arise in a new moral climate where the Means justify the End, and not *vice versa*. The creation of this climate—that is what I imagine I am fighting for.

But if the Colonel prefers dripping—let him. He laughs best who laughs last. I wish the time of the great, liberating laughter had come. For this is our unique and ultimate war aim: to teach this planet to laugh again. At the moment we are still howling like dogs in the dark. I wish the time of laughter had come.

Yours fraternally,
ARTHUR KOESTLER

LONDON BOY

I WAS sitting in a cottage garden on Sunday when I heard a small boy evacuee, as he went past on the other side of the hedge, saying to a companion: "I would rather commit sooeecide than live in a place like this." Possibly, he was exaggerating, but even so it was astonishing to realise that so charming a part of England could be so heartily disliked by a small boy. Most visitors to the place regard it as what is called a beauty spot. "It's so like England," one of them recently said with enthusiasm. There are hills, and woods leading up to the hills, and a common, and a pond, and animals, and an inn, and a blacksmith's forge; and all of these are of the first quality. There is so much to look at and to listen to that it is difficult to find time to read or write. And, at the present moment, the hedges are everywhere thick with blackberries. Life here must surely be to a small boy a perpetual holiday.

That, however, may be a sentimental view—the view of one who had special reasons for liking the country since his childhood. The wise men of the past seem, many of them, to have agreed roughly with the small boy in his estimate of country life. Did not Socrates say—probably, he did not—that he hated the sight of trees because he associated them with the world outside Athens? Dr. Johnson was as faithful to London as Socrates was to Athens. "When a man is tired of London," he said, "he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford." If anyone but Dr. Johnson had said this, I should have called it absolute nonsense. But, since Dr. Johnson said it, I will not go further than to call it almost absolute nonsense. There is nearly always something to be said for Dr. Johnson's extravagances, and our prejudices in favour of rusticity should not blind us to the grain of truth in his praise of the urban above the rural life. There is no use, for example, in dismissing as rubbish his remark that "whoever has once experienced

the full flow of London talk, when he returns to country friendships and rural sports, must either be content to turn baby again and play with the rattle, or he will pine away like a great fish in a little pond and die for want of his usual food." A third argument of Johnson's, which must be carefully weighed, against abandoning London for the country, is that "a small country town is not the place in which one would choose to quarrel with a wife; every human being in such a place is a spy."

If Johnson were the only great Englishman who had written in this fashion, one might have attributed his opinions to eccentricity. But his rival in the general affection, Charles Lamb, was equally dogmatic in his preference of the town to the country. It was in a letter to the Wordsworths, I think, that he disparaged mountains and devoted his superlatives to London with its theatres and the "sweet security of the streets." Even Hazlitt, who lived for a time in a pretty part of the country, declared that London is "the only place in which the child grows completely into the man."

Prose, indeed, from Plato to Dickens, seems strongly to favour the life of the townsman above that of the countryman. The poets are more rustic in their asseverations, but are they so honest? There seems to be something artificial about the pastoral poetry that has come down to us. Phyllis and Corydon resemble figures on the stage rather than inhabitants of the countryside. Sweet Auburn was the invention of a poet who preferred to live in town. It cannot be denied that many poets have proved the sincerity of the protestations of their love for country life by retiring to the country. But on the whole the love of country life seems to be abnormal—a modern fashion resulting from the triumph of romantic literature in the nineteenth century. Many men have always liked the country as a place in which to hunt and shoot animals; but to live in the country, as Wordsworth did, with nothing to do but look at wild daffodils and the lesser celandine, and no one to talk to except little cottage girls and leech-gatherers, would have bored them to death.

If love of the country had been a natural passion, there would have been no need of all this Back-to-the-Land propaganda of modern times. Who has ever heard of a Back-to-the-Town propaganda? So widespread is the taste for town life that peasants from earthly paradises flock into the slums of the great ports rather than remain at home. Romance and adventure are symbolised for them, not by lakes and mountains, but by the lamps in a back street. The love of towns is a point on which the countryman and the townsman seem to be ardently at one.

Yet town means to most people something vastly different from what it meant to Dr. Johnson and Charles Lamb. To Johnson it meant a place in which he had unlimited opportunities of talking to an audience that would listen to him. If he had settled in a village and attempted to lay down the law in the local inn on morals, politics and literature, it is possible that he would ultimately have been left in a corner to ruminate and talk to himself. He was, it is true, one of the most adaptable of conversationalists, but we cannot imagine him spending night after night in disputations with Uncle Tom Cobley. Hence, for a man of his temperament, it would have been a mistake to live outside London.

The suicidal small boy, however, had no such need to breathe the smoky air of London. He could probably get in the country all the talk he wants on his favourite subjects—cricket, football, school, other boys, and things to eat. Even in the country, the wireless keeps him in touch with civilisation, and from it he can hear:

> Say, little hen,
> When, when, when,
> Will you lay me an egg for my tea?

as often as any rational human being could bear to listen to it. And how many pleasures he has in the country that the town cannot provide—looking at cattle, throwing stones at bats, playing on flowery grass, or, just now, gathering blackberries! This last, I think, even the most anti-rural town children do enjoy. I have lately heard some of them making rival boasts of the amounts they have gathered. "I got two bowls," shouts one of them. "I got more than you." "More my foot!" another shouts back; "is one of your bowls a washing bowl?" "No," the first admits. "I got two bowls," declares the second, "and one of them's a washing bowl." They seemed to have no complaints to make of country life just then.

Probably, the blackberry-gatherers are more typical of the town-children now living in the country than the potential suicide. After all, the ordinary child can be happy anywhere if he is kindly treated, given enough to eat and does not feel lonely. Life perpetually appeals to his inquisitiveness. He can be happy even in an overcrowded third-class railway carriage. I was travelling in such a compartment on Monday when, the guard having waved his green flag and jumped on to the moving train a small boy looked at his mother and asked: "Mummy, do guards ever get killed when they wave their flags and the train begins to move"? Life can obviouslynever be boring so long as it is possible to think of extraordinary questions to ask. And the country, no less than the town, invites an endless series of extraordinary questions.

Still we must make allowances for the nostalgia of the little boy who preferred suicide to country life. All his happiest associations were probably with town, and, where a human being's happiest associations are, there will his heart be. His native street may look deplorable to an aesthete's eye; but, no doubt, there are shops in it, plenty of them, with windows that provide a more appetising prospect than green fields. The hard pavements are a fine playground if they are the pavements to which you are accustomed, and no country scenery can make up for the absence of crowds, lamps, and policemen. Happiness seems—in many cases, at least—to be independent alike of riches and the beauties of Nature. If we depended on beauty for our happiness, would not we modern town-dwellers—and bungalow-dwellers—be the most miserable of men? As it is, the ugliest suburb in London is probably the dreamland of many people who are now living in boredom among the Wiltshire downs.

After all, London is a city of the imagination. It is often said that Londoners have no civic sense: I do not believe this. It seems to me that most Londoners are proud of belonging to London and cannot help looking down on the streetless wastes of the countryside. The world outside: what is it but a wilderness?—all very well for a holiday, but no place to live in for anyone who has tasted the sweets of living among noisy traffic and in noisy crowds. That, no doubt, is what the little boy—a compulsory country child owing to circumstances over which he had no control—felt. I do not share his point of view, but he was only putting into other words what Dr. Johnson had said long before him.

Y. Y.

THE MOVIES

Nazi News Reel.
"The Pilot is Safe" and "Flight from Destiny," at the Regal.
"Underground," at Warner's.
"The Shepherd of the Hills," at the Carlton.

Film-goers have had the chance this week of seeing ten minutes from the new Nazi terror film of the attack on Russia. Mr. Brendan Bracken has shown imagination in releasing these pictures at once; it was eighteen months before *Baptism of Fire* (the violation of Poland) was admitted to English screens in an edition of the March of Time. The same visual tactics are repeated: a succession of shots, taken in action, of advancing mechanised troops, blown-up bridges, artillery working at point-blank range, and dive-bombing on targets. The last—the dive-bombing—was once the Nazi trump-card for breaking down audiences in neutral countries. Now, in an English edition, spectacle and horror are held up as an object-lesson. It is as well that persons too easily optimistic about Russia should have a glimpse of reality.

The other good film this week also comes from the Ministry of Information. A pilot has to bale out over the Channel and while he is descending we see the machinery working for his rescue. Coastguards, observer corps, control rooms, planes of coastal command and speed boats, all take a hand in it. On a very still day in the Channel the pilot is spotted, lost and eventually hauled back to land. The final shot shows him drinking a glass of beer in the evening and listening to the news: "Two of our planes are missing, but one of the pilots is safe." This episode races towards its conclusion without an idle second.

Flight from Destiny is as slow as *The Pilot is Safe* is quick. How much boredom came into the cinema with the arrival of the sound-track! The dialogue of *Flight from Destiny* is so banal that we are even made to forget that the film has quite a good idea: a professor of philosophy with six months to live decides to spend them in murdering someone who would be better out of the way. This theme isn't made as exciting as it should be. Some of the details are unconvincing. The plot hinges on a number of fake Pieros, which deceive the experts but look more like Grecos. Not even Thomas Mitchell can make the chief part more than mildly interesting.

Underground is another *Freedom Radio*. Refugee accents take the place of Mr. Clive Brook's perfect English, and you may or may not find this an advantage. It is stirring, swift, with a good story and more horrors than usual even for films involving the Gestapo. Its chief originality is that it shows a Nazi officer, minus one arm, who is a human being.

Blood oaths, death beds, a half-wit, a witch, grim men facing one another across a technicolour landscape: that is the diet of *The Shepherd of the Hills*. Betty Field gives an attractive performance as an untamed wisp of a thing, but the whole film would have been more powerful if its documentary possibilities had been brought out. One would like to see more of this Ozark mountain community on days when it isn't so busy expiating the past.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

Cambridge Theatre Concerts.

The musical public has discovered at last both the Cambridge Theatre and Mr. Louis Kentner. The audience last Sunday was packed, to enjoy a good if familiar programme. Of the two symphonies, Haydn's *Clock* and Beethoven's No. 8, the second got the better performance; the orchestra (L.S.O. under Charles Brill) seemed to have warmed up and responded with a more certain vigour. In between came Mozart's piano concerto in D. Louis Kentner played delightfully, and his conception included the long cadenzas, which appear so often as an oddly cumbrous growth. Kentner will be playing the Emperor concerto with the same orchestra and conductor on Sunday, September 21.

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, September 13th—
S.C.R. Week-end School for Teachers on Soviet Education, Royal Hotel, Woburn Place, 2.30. And on September 14th, 10.

Pouishnoff Pianoforte Recital, Cambridge Theatre, 3.

SUNDAY, September 14th—
Rt. Hon. Lord Snell: "Problems of Post-war Reconstruction," Conway Hall, 11.
"Kaleidoscope of the Arts," Arts Theatre, 3.

TUESDAY, September 16th—
Opening of A.I.A. Exhibition of War Art, Charing Cross Underground Station, 11.
W. Glenvil Hall: "Finance," 13 Suffolk Street, S.W.1, 6.

WEDNESDAY, September 17th—
Mrs. Barbara Wootton: "Races, Frontiers and Peoples," Friends House, 1. Admission, including lunch, 2s. Tickets from Miss Harrison, 2 Cranbourne Court, Albert Bridge Road, S.W.11.

THURSDAY, September 18th—
Bonar Thompson at Rudolf Steiner Hall, 6.30.
New Commonwealth Society Luncheon. Speaker: Dr. Wellington Koo. Royal Hotel. Tickets 3s. 6d.

Correspondence

CHRISTIAN REVIVAL

SIR,—I am deeply grateful for your generous praise of my book, *The Church, Impotent or Triumphant?* but there is one point in Kingsley Martin's sympathetic article which seems to demand a brief comment for the sake of the vitally necessary unity of purpose among all men of good will.

With Victor Gollancz, Francis Williams and George Orwell, Kingsley Martin realises the necessity for "a spiritual revival of the Socialist movement." That is vastly encouraging. He is, however, apparently convinced that orthodox Christianity cannot provide the basis for that revival. That is not surprising. What I regret is, he implies that the doctrines, which are, he says, "unacceptable to the majority of educated men," cannot be honestly repeated by any educated men. The believer is accustomed to be regarded by the unbeliever as a fool. That does not matter in the least. If, however, his sincerity, so far as his faith is concerned, is doubted, whole-hearted co-operation in the tremendous task of shaping the new civilisation must be made more difficult.

I cannot understand how any Christian can avoid being a Socialist, but I can perfectly well understand why many Socialists repudiate Christianity. I am convinced that, without "the faith once delivered to the saints," men and women will never realise the ideal, comely and satisfying communal life. But I do not fail to understand the historic and philosophic defence of the Marxian denunciation of revealed religion.

The Socialist objective is clear and definite. There must be some very heavy going before it is attained. Not for his own sake, but for the common good, the Christian Socialist has the right to ask his comrades to believe that he does not, Sunday after Sunday, repeat the Nicene Creed with his tongue in his cheek, and that it is because he realises the implications of the Creeds that he is eager to play his little part in the war against Mammon and all his works. SIDNEY DARK

Savile Club, W.1.

HOW TO WIN THE WAR

SIR,—I regret that Commander King-Hall should think I treated him unfairly when reviewing his book, *Total Victory*, in your columns. But, having studied the points he raises—with, I hope, complete willingness to admit myself wrong if it so appeared—I am quite unable to see that I have done him any injustice.

The first point he takes exception to is my remark that there would be no "awakened idealism" about Germany's acceptance of our terms, and he says I will find no reference to this expression in his book. But on re-reading Chapter 10 I find that that is precisely the spirit which informs it. I could cite at least five passages which bear me out; but one, which occurs on p. 114, must suffice. "The approach must be to the individual brain, *and when a sufficient number of individual German brains have been converted to the service of the democratic cause*, organisations of a form and character adapted to the will to act of our German allies will spontaneously come into existence." (*Italics mine.*) If conversion to the service of the democratic cause does not imply "awakened idealism," then words to me mean something different to what they mean to Commander King-Hall.

The other point turns on my statement that Commander King-Hall "seems to envisage a Germany which, having shed Hitlerism, could be trusted to enter a system of European co-operation with good faith." "This," he says, "is the exact opposite of what I propose, *vide* my plans for an overwhelmingly strong Anglo-American peace force."

Here I may say that the author contemplates an Anglo-American message to the German people in which certain propositions would be put forward (p. 199). These include an armistice as soon as the forces of the Reich are withdrawn from occupied territories and free Governments exist, and recognition that such cases as the Polish Corridor, Danzig, the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia, and the relations between Austria and the Reich, "are suitable subjects for peaceful negotiations in any later settlement." Germany is not to be disarmed, though "after the armistice the British and U.S.A. Governments reserve the right to maintain such armed forces as they consider necessary for security"—but not in Germany, for the occupation of Germany is nowhere mentioned. Moreover, although provision is made for *The Peace Force* which he envisages to be overwhelmingly strong at sea and in the air, with ratios of strengths laid down, it is not thought worth while to bother about the army, for the only thing we are told about the military forces is that they will protect "the bases of *The Peace Force*."

The point is whether these proposals justify my comment and my opinion still is that they do.

Army and Navy Club. CLIVE GARCIA

AUSTRIA INFELIX

SIR,—There are still many people who are of the opinion that the annexation of Austria in 1938 was in concord with the wishes and intentions of the majority of the Austrian people. What are the facts: In March, 1938, Hitler hunted down his first victim "according to plan." All the means which some years later were employed against France, Norway, the countries of the Balkans were given a try out in our country; the slow poisoning of public opinion, the weakening of the will to resist by five years of corruption, intimidation, arson and murder. This undermining of the vitality of the country was assisted involuntarily by the Austrian Government's acts that destroyed democracy. Seyss-Inquart served as the Quisling who, in the most critical moment, stepped in and pretended that it was the people of Austria who had sent for the invader. World public opinion had not become accustomed yet to these Hitler puppets and therefore his words were given credit.

We Austrians experience the after effects of this propaganda to-day, facing the somewhat ironical situation of being regarded as "enemy aliens" because Hitler's method of "bloodless" conquest had not been recognised as such when our country fell.

But the real spirit of the Austrians was best revealed when the people gave their answer to Hitler's ultimatum by establishing complete unity and by linking together all forces of resistance. In the days which followed the ultimatum (February, 1938), all differences of opinions and creed paled before the threatening shadow which fell over the country. Catholics and socialists, peasants and townspeople, workers and professional people joined in resistance. True, in the end Hitler succeeded in invading Austria, but he did not succeed because unity of the people was lacking. This same unity and spirit of resistance inspires the Austrian people to-day and makes them an ally in the common struggle. The Austrian refugees represent a part of the Austrian people and want to participate.

The Council of Austrians has approached all organisations of Austrians in this country to form a political representation of the Austrians in Great Britain.

It may be said that such a body cannot be formed, because the Austrian emigration does not represent all classes and parties of the Austrian people. This reservation would be relevant if the proposed body would claim to be the representation of all Austrians and all Austrian parties at home, if it would endeavour to be a substitute to an Austrian parliament or government. The only objects of the proposed body should be to unite all Austrians in this country for the best possible collaboration in the fight of the great allies. There are at present a great number of Austrian political and non-political organisations in this country; however divergent their opinions may be they are unanimous in their desire to smash Hitler. This collaboration is not dependent on a decision about the future of Austria, it is not necessary to decide now whether Austria will be part of a Danube Federation, of an All-European State system or of some other sort of Federation. It is necessary to do everything now that will give the Austrians a chance to decide their future after the war in full independence and sovereignty. For this, Austria must be reconstituted under a democratic government. A united body is essential for an effective participation of the Austrians in this country in the war effort. W. SCHIFF, *Chairman*,

Council of Austrians in Great Britain.

THE INDIAN "CABINET"

SIR,—Critic's question about the status of new Ministers in the Viceroy's Council was answered by the Duke of Devonshire in the House of Lords debate on 5th August, the report of which was inadequately summarised in the press and should be studied by all who are interested in Indian problems. The Duke said (*Hansard*, col. 1076): "I have been at pains to emphasise that this is not regarded as a constitutional advance—not even as an instalment of constitutional change."

Under the ninth schedule of the Government of India Act, 1935, the Governor-General is bound by the votes of the majority of members of his Council (so-called ministers) present at a meeting. But he may, if he thinks the "safety, tranquillity or interest of British India or any part thereof" are or may be essentially affected, over-rule the majority. In such a case any two members may require that the matter should be reported to the Secretary of State with any minutes recorded by Members. The ultimate authority in such cases of disagreement thus rests with the Secretary of State, who is responsible to Parliament.

9 Staverton Road, RICHARD BURN

Oxford.

[The Viceroy's Council differs from a Cabinet in the following ways: (1) It is responsible to the Viceroy, and through him to the Secretary of State, and not to the elected Indian Parliament; (2) Defence and Foreign Relations (External Affairs) and other important public concerns, are reserved to the Viceroy's sole competence, even if Federation should come into being. It is essential to understanding of Indian affairs to keep in mind that the reconstituted Council is not a substitute for a democratically responsible Cabinet in effective control of Indian policy. ED. *N.S. & N.*]

THE INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE ASSOCIATION

SIR,—The International Brigade volunteers were the first to take up arms against the forces of Fascist dictators. They fought alongside the Spanish people against overwhelming odds. It is tragic that 3,000 former International Brigade members are still held in the concentration camps of Vichy France. Their number is diminishing, as some are handed over to the Gestapo, and others perish in chain gangs, which are sent to build the Trans-Sahara railway. But through all the long years of waiting these men have not lost hope that their friends in all free countries will come to their rescue. Their letters bear ample testimony to the same fighting spirit which sustained them in the Spanish war.

The International Brigade Association, composed of former English volunteers, is now leading a National Campaign on their behalf. The American Government, whose opinion still counts in Vichy France, is urged to intervene for them. Many South and Central American states are willing to accept them. £580 were recently collected and sent to the concentration camps. This was very little, but it showed that these veterans in the anti-Fascist struggle have not been forgotten.

In order to get wider support for this campaign, a concert and meeting has been arranged at the Cambridge Theatre, London, on Saturday, September 20th, 3 p.m. The response has been so great that all tickets were sold out in two days, and it has now been decided to repeat the concert at the same place at 6 p.m.

THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION readers, who have so often and so generously helped the Spanish

people and their friends in the past, will undoubtedly respond again to this urgent call for help. Contributions can be sent to the Secretary, International Brigade Association, 58 Theobalds Road, W.C.1.

JACK BRENT

ARMY PETROL

SIR,—Your London Diarist calls attention to the wastage of petrol in the Army as experienced by an Army lorry driver. As transport clerk in my unit, and in many depots all over the country, I have for long remarked upon this scandalous wastage, which is prevalent throughout the Army: neglect and thoughtlessness, or mere irresponsibility (in any case, criminal) by the officers in charge of transport who permit, and are responsible for, this wholesale waste, can only be accounted for by the amazing laxity and corresponding indifference of auditors and accountants, who have never once, in my varied experience, queried any item, however staggering. Only this week no fewer than twelve large lorries were sent a distance of about twelve miles to fill up with 12 gallons each, and used two gallons each in the process. This although we are only a couple of miles outside a large town well supplied with pumps. Why on earth cannot the authorities arrange a system of supply that would obviate this disgusting wastage? Surely it is not beyond the capacity of the big brains among the high-ups to arrange this? If it is, may I humbly suggest that a few insignificant transport clerks like myself be called in—our services can be obtained gratis, and results assured! I agree with your Diarist that when some poor motorist is heavily fined for using an extra measly gallon or so in pursuit of his legitimate business interest—perhaps more of national importance than many of the footling journeys in which Army lorries are constantly employed—it makes one wonder when we shall see some of our brass-hats in the dock!

"R.A.O.C."

ALLIED CONSCRIPTION

SIR,—It is now almost a year after the British Government's announcement that Allied Governments in this country would be granted compulsory powers to call up their nationals in accordance with their own national laws for service in their forces. Opposition against legislation of that character mostly concerned Polish Jews. Their position under such an Act would have been very abnormal and tragic. It is widely known that most of them left Poland because of anti-Semitic and reactionary tendencies; some of them have no intention of ever returning there and quite a number amongst them were refused the prolongation of their passports by the Polish authorities in London. Still others were declared stateless and many have never been to Poland, speak no Polish, have no ties with Poland, nor were they treated with due courtesy by their consulates abroad. Besides the bitter anti-Semitism in pre-war Poland, regrettable incidents have occurred in the Polish Army in France and this country, and in spite of official denials of anti-Semitism some Polish newspapers published in this country were far from friendly towards Polish Jews in particular. Under those conditions, therefore, it would have been grossly unfair if such people would have been forced to join no other but the Polish Army. The Bill was indeed temporarily dropped.

It now appears, according to an answer in Parliament on August 9th, that the introduction of compulsory military service for Allied citizens is once again the intention of the British Government. If this is so, the Government's promises of last year, viz., that in the event of such legislation being submitted to the House of Commons provisions would be made for the same examinations and exemptions which are enjoyed by British subjects, should not be forgotten. The most important provision which should be embodied in any Bill of this type must be the free option open to every Allied subject of entering the British Army should he prefer to serve there in preference to his own.

"A POLE, WHEN ASKED TO FIGHT,
A JEW, WHEN ASKED TO SUFFER"

EDUCATION

SIR,—Your correspondent, T. M. Bruce Lockhart, is deterred from sending his son to a State school by the fear that he might be "taught history by a Pacifist, economics by a Fascist, English by a Communist and Scripture (40 minutes a week) by an Oxford Groupist."

Should this prove to be the young man's experience at such a school—though I question its probability—he should congratulate himself on his good fortune in coming into contact with such diversity of opinion and influence.

Were I his father my greatest fear would be that he might be taught history by a Conservative, economics by a Conservative, English by a Conservative, and Scripture (40 minutes a week) by a Conservative.

GEORGE MACKLEY

DOCTORING AFTER THE WAR

SIR,—A Swede said to me the other day: "You have two crimes in your country: (1) to be poor, (2) to be ill." Asked to explain the Swedish model he said *all* hospitals were State controlled. Revenue was obtained from State and Communal taxation. In the former all incomes are taxed at a fixed percentage, and therefore the stigma of charity did not exist. If a well-off person chose to live in a small house the assessment from the community (local rates) were in accordance with income. Hospital treatment was for all alike. Private rooms could be arranged but only for accommodation alone and not for any differentiation in treatment, and he instanced the case of a boy about to have his tonsils out which would cost his parents, here, £15 15s. operation fee plus his stay in hospital. The actual assessment in Sweden would, in this case, amount to 1s. 6d. a day and the State doctor would do the operation. No wonder it is a crime to be poor and to be ill!

Guildford. W. J. DAVIS

PRISON REGULATIONS

SIR,—When Mr. Winston Churchill was Home Secretary in 1910 he introduced a regulation that prisoners who had not shown "moral turpitude" should have special treatment in prison, such as wearing their own clothes, having some food sent in, and most important, receiving letters and writing materials. This was won by the suffragettes at some cost to themselves, and it is a great disappointment to those of us who engaged in that fight, to find that these privileges are not being allowed to conscientious objectors imprisoned at the present time.

The present-day version of the then famous regulation 243a is numbered 7 (166) and reads: "*Amelioration of conditions in special cases.*

In the case of any offender whose previous character is good, and who has been convicted of, or committed to prison for an offence not involving dishonesty, cruelty, indecency or serious violence, the Commissioners may allow such amelioration of the conditions prescribed in the foregoing rules as the Secretary of State may approve in respect of wearing of prison clothes, bathing, haircutting, cleaning of cells, employment, exercise, books and otherwise.

Provided that no such amelioration shall be greater than that granted under the rules for offenders of the First Division."

It seems plain that conscientious objectors imprisoned for refusal to obey the findings of a Tribunal, which may be at variance with their conscience, come under the category of those who have not been convicted of "dishonesty, cruelty, indecency or serious violence," and should, therefore, have this regulation applied in their case. There are doubtless other political prisoners besides conscientious objectors who should also have these rights accorded to them.

In the interests of democracy, which it is alleged we are fighting to preserve, it is to be hoped that all who believe in justice and seek it for themselves should try to secure "fair play" for conscientious objectors and other political prisoners.

SYBIL MORRISON,
Organising Secretary for the
Labour Pacifist Fellowship.

THE ONION DISPOSAL SQUAD

SIR,—In my kitchen-garden there is a lavishly tended onion-bed, which has hitherto produced a sufficiency for my needs, my gardener, and sundry other persons in the district.

But, I decided to plough up a grass paddock for food production—to the satisfaction of the local War Agricultural Committee; and by this procedure my "holding" under cultivation ranks as exceeding one acre, and every single onion we have grown is forfeit. I am now required to hand over my entire crop, both garden and field, to the Area Officer of the newly appointed "Disposal Squad"—the National Vegetable Marketing Company, Ltd., of which Lord Woolton is the largest shareholder, according to the *Times*. My gardener is thereby deprived of his perquisite; he is forbidden to sell or to keep the bulbs, but he and his family are to draw their "ration" of 2 lb. per head from the common pool.

Similarly, my household must buy at 5d. per lb. from a local greengrocer, whilst our entire crop is bought at 2¾d. per lb. by this Company, presumably enabling it to pay a dividend to its shareholders, through the difference in price between the growers' and the retailers' remuneration.

Having sacrificed our crop and our convenience to this distributing agency, I feel it logical and desirable that the public should demand that the Company's balance sheet, or profit and loss account, shall be published in the press—a step in the great battle against Big Business methods in national welfare.

"JAMES'S KEEPING"

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Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

IT would be interesting to know how many readers of this column have recently re-read a novel by Dickens, how thoroughly and with what measure of appreciation. For the average Englishman Dickens belongs to adolescence. During later life he is prepared, theoretically at least, to concede the novelist all manner of literary virtues; but, if pressed, he would be hard put to it to define those qualities. The associations of childhood are omnipresent. In fact, though Dickens has a variety of characteristics that recommend him to the young, his chief qualities—and, incidentally, his greatest vices—are appreciable only by an adult critical sense. The purveyor of blameless fiction, and wholesale manufacturer of narratives that have found their way unquestioned into every school library, was among the most complex and curious artists that have yet appeared—a writer in whom every apparent simplicity proves on closer inspection to conceal an ambiguity and who composed, so to speak, both with the right and with the left hand, one member seldom entirely conscious of what the other did. To appreciate his strangeness to the full, it is instructive to begin with a novel that is either completely unfamiliar or of which the impression has been almost obliterated during the course of time. *Our Mutual Friend* may provide a convenient starting-point. Less hackneyed than *Bleak House* or *David Copperfield*, it contains passages as splendid as anything that is to be found in either novel. It displays the writer's genius at its very highest concentration, but also exhibits his astounding drawbacks.

A journey through *Our Mutual Friend* is prolific of surprises and, during its latter stages, attended by many crushing disappointments. Few stories begin so well. It is with a feeling of exhilaration—almost with the excitement of some brilliant new discovery—that we release ourselves on the rushing stream of the author's narrative, swing round on the swift current of his verbal fantasy, are swept in and out of the extraordinary backwaters of his imagination. What a prodigious love of, and what an unfailing skill in, the use of words and images! The juxtaposition of the first and second episodes—Jesse Hexam and his daughter fishing for corpses among the Thames-side wharves, the Veneerings and their hangers-on busy with a more conventional kind of scavenging—is a bold device and, by the effect it produces, completely justified. Already a vision of London is developing in the reader's mind: the vast mysterious gloomy river and the tight-packed congeries of ancient wooden buildings, taverns, warehouses, stairs and jetties that scramble down its banks: grim squares, with crossing-sweepers and gingerbread-sellers huddled near black Georgian railings, and pale footmen yawning in foggy entrance halls: coaches and chariots in the mud, and helpless drunkards asleep amid the cabbage-leaves and horse-droppings of Covent Garden.

From every damp crevice emerges some fresh remarkable personage; and the novelist's genius envelops and absorbs them all. Dinner at the Veneerings' is a magnificent *tour de force*. Like the creations of myth, these diners-out are both terrible and comic. That Dickens in certain aspects has an unexpected affinity to Marcel Proust—that his verbal constructions now and then are nearly as complicated, very often as subtle and as fantastic—was pointed out not long ago by an ingenious English critic. But there is an additional resemblance in the enthusiastic detachment with which he depicts many of his characters—those with whom the sympathies of his heart did not, at the very outset, become unfortunately and sometimes fatally involved. Albertine is an example of Proust's failure to compose a portrait when his own feelings and secret prejudices rose in a misty veil between artist and subject. The characters that Dickens failed to realise are too exasperating and too notorious to deserve enumeration. But each novelist was a master of the minor personage, examined under the bright lens of an incomparable poetic gift which glorified as it enlarged, and illumined the essential oddity of every object on which it rested.

This process of magnification or mythological enlargement is seen at its best in the account of the Veneerings' dinner-party. Dickens's literary impressionism is much in evidence. His affinity with Proust need not be laboured: just as striking are the suggestions of Henry James, Joyce and several other modern English novelists.

> The great looking-glass above the sideboard reflects the table and the company. Reflects the new Veneering crest, in gold and eke in silver, frosted and also thawed, a camel of all work. . . . Reflects Veneering; forty, wavy-haired, dark, tending to corpulence, sly, mysterious, filmy—a kind of sufficiently well-looking veiled prophet, not prophesying. Reflects Mrs. Veneering; fair, aquiline-nosed and fingered, not so much light hair as she might have, gorgeous in raiment and jewels, enthusiastic, propitiatory, conscious that a corner of her husband's veil is over herself. Reflects Podsnap; prosperously feeding . . . Reflects Mrs. Podsnap; fine woman for Professor Owen, quantity of bone, neck and nostrils like a rocking-horse, hard features, majestic headdress in which Podsnap has hung golden offerings. Reflects Twemlow; grey, dry, polite, susceptible to east wind. . . . Reflects mature young lady; raven locks, and complexion that lights up well when well powdered—as it is—carrying on considerably in the captivation of mature young gentleman; with too much nose in his face, too much ginger in his whiskers, too much torso in his waistcoat, too much sparkle in his studs, his eyes, his buttons, his talk, and his teeth. Reflects charming old Lady Tippins on Veneering's right; with an immense obtuse drab oblong face, like a face in a tablespoon, and a dyed Long Walk up the top of her head, as a convenient public approach to the bunch of false hair behind, pleased to patronise Mrs. Veneering opposite who is pleased to be patronised.

Here Dickens's humour is as hard and unkind as the light of the dinner-table. The Veneerings are "bran-new people," City people, diligent social climbers. Every acquaintance whom they can attract becomes, automatically and instantaneously, an "oldest friend." Poor little Mr. Twemlow (own cousin to an earl and a professional diner-out, though he lodges over a livery stable yard in Duke Street, St. James's) spends hours with nervous hand pressed to his tight aching forehead, as he meditates the insoluble problem of the Veneerings' social alchemy—how so many "oldest friends" can be conjured up at such short notice out of nothing; while the Veneerings' butler (known as the Analytical Chemist from the cautious and disbelieving manner in which he handles dishes and decanters) adds a touch of macabre scepticism to the background of his employers' triumphs.

It was a particularly happy thought, from the stream of casual chit-chat round the Veneerings' table to produce the main theme (or what purports to be the main theme) of *Our Mutual Friend*—the search for the heir to old Harmon's dust-raised fortune. The dust-landscape round Boffin's Bower comes mysteriously to life in Mortimer's languid gossip:

> "The man," Mortimer goes on, addressing Eugene, "whose name is Harmon, was the only son of a tremendous old rascal who made his money by Dust."
>
> "Red velveteens and a bell?" the gloomy Eugene enquires.
>
> "And a ladder and basket if you like. By which means, or others, he grew rich as a Dust Contractor, and lived in a hollow in a hilly country entirely composed of Dust. On his own small estate the growling old vagabond threw up his own mountain range, like an old volcano, and its geological formation was Dust. Coal-dust, vegetable-dust, bone-dust, crockery dust, rough dust, and sifted dust—all manner of Dust."

Among surroundings as odd as this, and on the same level of sinister imagination, the story remains throughout the whole of Book the First. London itself is the chief character of these earlier episodes; other personages are real and significant in so far as they form a part of the London scene. It is London that fills them out—gives them colour and energy. The characters who impress us most are the men and women whose urban habitat is best established: the Veneerings in their vast, new, vulgar, over-varnished house; the Podsnaps, occupants of "a shady angle adjoining Portman Square," full of massive furniture, heavy plate, walnut and rose-wood tables and "swarthy giants of looking-glasses"; Mr. Wilfer going home to his cottage in Holloway across "a tract of suburban Sahara, where tiles and bricks were burnt, bones were boiled, carpets were beat, rubbish was shot, dogs were fought" and numerous kiln-fires made lurid smudges on the encircling fog-wall; Mr. Venus, in his little shop in the Clerkenwell back-street (with the two preserved frogs in the windows fighting an endless duel), among the disarticulated odds and ends of half a dozen human skeletons.

Up to this point the reader's progress is rapid and adventurous. Then, gradually, a change occurs; for all the acuteness of their outline, he becomes aware that there is something surprisingly two-dimensional about Dickens's characters; the Dolls' Dressmaker pops into dreadful prominence at the opening of Book the Second. Most odious of the author's creations, Miss Jenny Wren, would be less insufferable did a horrid vitality not inform her portrait. Miss Wren incorporates one of Dickens's favourite obsessions—the reversal of the ordinary child-parent situation. Both she and Bella Wilfer "mother" their fathers—Bella tenderly, almost amorously, with teasing and hair-pulling: Jenny, thriving on disappointment, with ogrish zest. The novelist himself is far too stirred to be quite dispassionate. For Dickens the contemplation of virtue—particularly feminine virtue—would appear often to have been a means of sensuous self-indulgence. And the more he revels in the idea of virtue, the weaker and vaguer seems his grasp of any idea of goodness.

Thus *Our Mutual Friend* is a crowded but an extremely empty book. It has an enormous ramifying plot; but that plot, if attentively examined, proves to be full of false starts, dead ends and clues that lead nowhere. An important aspect of the original design is a study of the effect of wealth on human character. From being a harmless eccentric, Mr. Boffin becomes a tyrannous and grasping crank. In the last section, his creator—overwhelmed, apparently by a rush of universal optimism—decides to cover Boffin's sins with a coat of whitewash, but slaps it on with such an exhausted or such a reckless hand as to involve himself in several major inconsistencies and completely destroy the real sense of his previous portrait. In itself this mistake might have been unimportant were it not symptomatic of a flaw that runs through the whole conception—the absence amid brilliant stylistic virtues of a genuine sense of style. One of the tragedies of nineteenth-century English literature was that it should produce so many colossi in clay from the knees down, that it should have made genius almost synonymous with incompleteness. *Our Mutual Friend* is nearly a masterpiece—not quite an appalling failure. But both its qualities and its shortcomings are on the scale of an heroic age.

PETER QUENNELL

WAR IN THE AIR

The War in the Air. By DAVID GARNETT. *Chatto and Windus.* 7s. 6d.

The war in the air gets most publicity, yet people know remarkably little about that war: how it works, what it depends on, where it is leading. We know, vaguely, that mastery of the air is what counts; but we have come to learn this gradually and partially, so that our history needs to be recast in the light of such knowledge. This most of us are unwilling or incapable of doing. We still talk of the appeasement era in political terms, although that policy was decided by the number of squadrons Great Britain could put into the air in 1938; we "learnt the lesson of Poland," that it is useless to mobilise armies against air attack, and yet two years later, when Jugoslavia resisted, we hoped in some way that the rule wouldn't apply. The first thing about Mr. Garnett's book is that it gives us a clear history of the war up to Crete in terms of the aeroplane, on which so much depends.

The second point—and no doubt this impelled Mr. Garnett to write—is the importance to our war effort of understanding past weaknesses and the task ahead. During the period of the "phoney" war, for example, Gamelin refused to make an Allied air offensive for fear of the retaliation. Mr. Garnett believes that policy on the whole to have been sound. But, he goes on:

> From the point of view of mobilising Britain's war effort, it was doubly unfortunate that the public was led to believe that a vast expansion of the Royal Air Force was taking place when the Luftwaffe was really growing in size at a much greater rate than the British and French Air Forces put together. . . . Since an air offensive was vetoed owing to Allied weakness, that weakness should discreetly have been made known. To make it known was the only method of remedying it by a reorganisation of the aircraft industry. Even Parliament was kept in ignorance of the truth. This was a dangerous mistake.

A good deal of empty optimism (noticeable again, by the way, at the moment) can be traced back to the policy of never letting people know the worst. It is the sort of self-deception to which democracies are liable and which made France collapse like a pricked bladder. One does not feel that Mr. Garnett is exaggerating when he warns us that "anything which helps the citizens of our democracy to believe that victory is easy is treason."

Ignorance may result, too, in a clamour which will needlessly interfere with our war operations. It is natural that people in badly-bombed towns should start talking about giving the Nazis some of their own back. A backwoods politician and a leader-writer or two will fan the cry. Soon, pressure of a sort is being brought on the Air Ministry. What were the facts when "Bomb Berlin" began to be chanted? Mr. Garnett tells us. We had far fewer bombers than the Germans, and we could not afford to waste them on indiscriminate bombing when all their time was occupied in a carefully elaborated plan of attacking the key-points of Germany's supply. This plan, worked out in conjunction with the Ministry of Economic Warfare, was timed exactly to hit the weakest point of production.

> If the production of one item is knocked out all the rest is useless. Destroy the magneto factories and the factories building the other components of tanks, motor cars and aircraft are useless. The British bombing attacks have been made on this selective plan of knocking out the weakest link in the chain of manufacture. There are two advantages in this. The first is its economy. If you can hold up production in twenty factories by destroying one of them, you can use the Bombers which would have been used to bomb the other ninteeen to attack other targets and spread paralysis in other industries. The other is that you put a very large number of men out of work.

The irrelevance of "bomb Berlin" and of the league-match tables of raided German cities published in the *Daily Express* would be instantly obvious if facts like the above were more widely known. One last example from *War in the Air* of the advantages of knowing the truth. A good deal of criticism, justified in the circumstances, was made of our shortage of fighters in Greece and in Crete. On this point Mr. Garnett makes two observations. (1) Compared with the Germans we were still short of fighters. (2) The air arm, though the quickest in striking, is the slowest to prepare and set in motion; planes, ground staffs and a mass of material have to be transported, aerodromes have to be prepared, supplies guaranteed. It is important that civilians should understand these conditions, even at the expense of giving away a ha'porth of information to the enemy.

As a corrective to half-knowledge and hazy criticism, *War in the Air* is invaluable. Not only does Mr. Garnett provide a brief history of the war from a new and vital angle; he gives us also a lucid picture of the different activities of the Air Force. Coastal Command, Bomber Command, Fighter Command. Conditions in Norway. Dunkirk (Mr. Garnett explains better than any previous writer why the Luftwaffe failed to massacre our waiting soldiers). The Battle of Taranto. The Battle of Britain. Long-distance bombing over Germany. Tactics of the night fighter. Types of British, German and Italian planes. Some of the most interesting passages compare, necessarily with caution, British and German air strengths. The balance in material is still against us, though in this twenty months' narrative it is a far cry from the brave little Polish air force, with a maximum speed of 95 m.p.h., to our present resources against the enemy. But still we want more fighters, more bombers. Mr. Garnett states that we need a striking force of two to three thousand heavy bombers to obtain a winning ascendancy in the air.

On the whole, *War in the Air* is reassuring, because it increases our confidence in the higher ranks of the R.A.F. Mr. Garnett does justice to the pilots and air crews, but their magnificent part in the war was already known. The Controller—even after pamphlets like *The Battle of Britain* and films like *Target for To-night*—is a less familiar figure. Here is Mr. Garnett's tribute to the Controller, and it will serve also as an example of the admirable plain prose in which the book is written:

> It will be remembered that *Alice Through the Looking Glass* is based upon a chess problem, played by very odd pieces upon a fantastic board. The Controller in Operations Room is playing a game more fantastic still. Compared with chess it would be simple were it not for the time element, and the time element is everything. Looking over his map table, the Controller is provided with all possible relevant information. There is the map of the clouds, the direction and strength of the wind at various heights, the A.A. defences and the balloon barrages. He is in touch with all his Fighters by radio telephone, so that when he speaks they can all hear him and obey.
>
> When information of a raid reaches him he has to calculate the direction and speed of the raiders and to order his Fighters up to a point in the sky where they will be able to make an interception. Where naval and military commanders work with movements in two dimensions, he works in three dimensions. But to make one such interception is the easiest part of the fascinating game he plays for stakes of life or death, freedom or slavery. At his word squadrons of Fighters move above the chequered board of Britain at 350 miles an hour, and the pieces won and lost fall flaming on to woods and fields and towns and villages below. And it is not, alas, a fanatasy or dream.
>
> The Controller's real difficulty is not to intercept any particular raid. Granted time and sufficient resources, that is a feat that any intelligent person could achieve. But the men doing the job have to make instantaneous decisions, and the forces at their disposal in the summer of 1940 were small. Moreover, they knew that the enemy could go on raiding for weeks and that his object was to wear down and destroy the British Fighter Command. The Controller's difficulty was to diagnose the main raid of the day—for some raids were only feints to draw off his Fighters—and to husband his resources so as not to be caught by a big raid when all his Fighters were on the ground refuelling and re-arming, or if they were in the air, when they had already expended fuel and ammunition . . . . . The Controller of Number Eleven Group ordered up twenty-one squadrons on September 27th, and each was able to report having sighted the enemy and made a successful interception. It was the high rate of interception which "made it possible for our superiority in pilots and aircraft to achieve its full effect." Indeed, it was what saved us.

This is, by the way, a book not for amateur strategists, but for everyone who can read good English and wants to know more than he will find in the newspapers. Mr. Garnett spent the first six months of the war as an Intelligence Officer in the Air Ministry. He has had practical experience of flying. He has no theories or prophecies, and he takes his facts as he finds them. G. W. STONIER

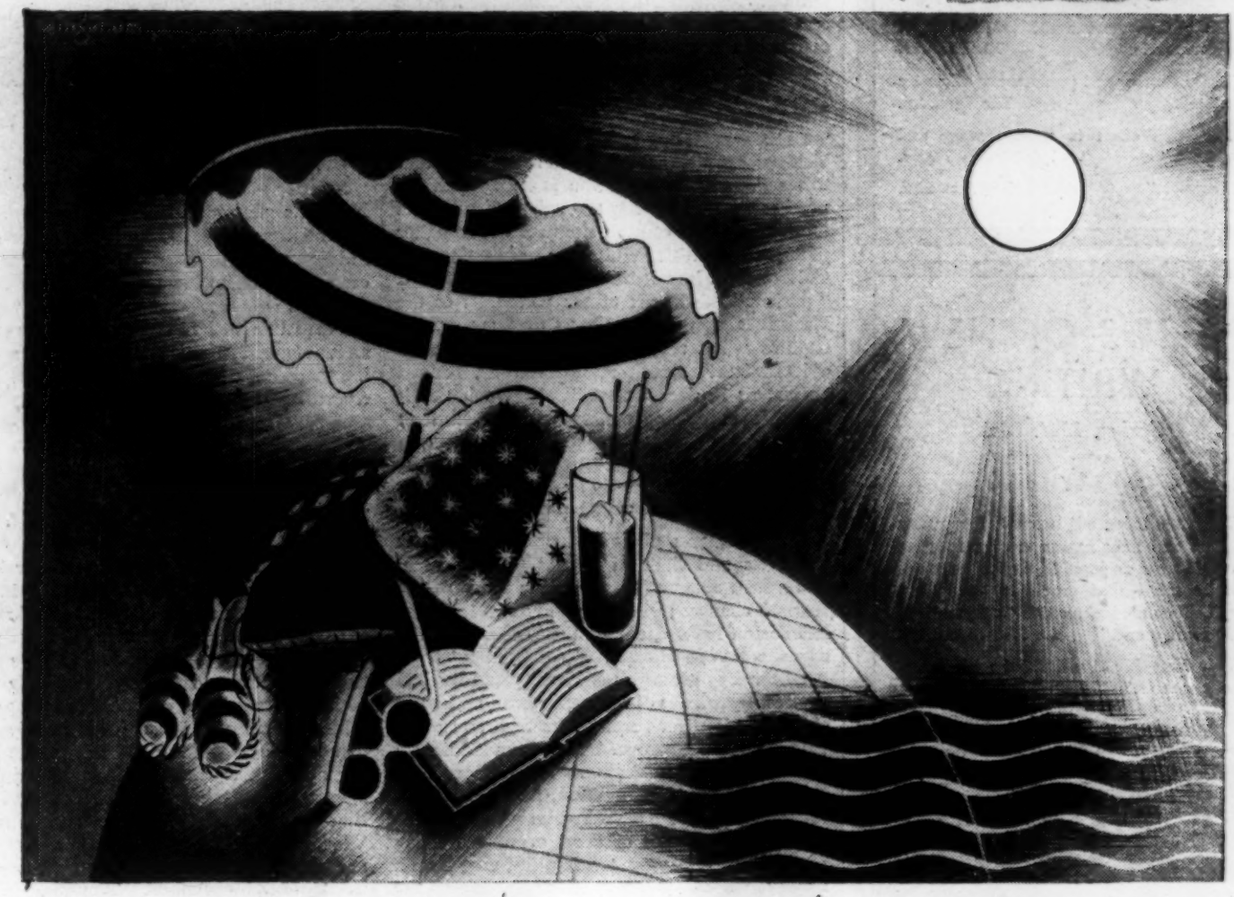
THE WHEELWRIGHT

The Journals of George Sturt. (GEORGE BOURNE 1890-1902.) *Cresset Press.* 8s. 6d.

The journals of George Sturt have not been published before and the present selection is made from the manuscript collection left to the British Museum after his death in 1927. They are readable because they contain the sort of raw material from which *The Wheelwright's Shop*, *A Small Boy in the Sixties* and the *Memoirs of a Surrey Labourer* were built up; and they are interesting as the gradual revelation of a temperament. Sturt matured in what his present editor, Mr. Grigson, calls the Early Shaw Age, but he met it as a country visitor, as an earnest enquirer who managed to preserve his roots and to stay in Farnham with the balance of his mind undisturbed. His decision to remain in his wheelwright's business and to forgo total participation in the exhausting excitements of Art and Earnestness was a good one for him; it enabled him to write a minor classic and to write other books which grow in genuine historical curiosity and value.

Sturt, as Mr. Grigson says, "believed intensely in the power of the human being over himself, in a deliberate self-culture of the kind Conrad admired in Hy. James." The early pages of the *Journal*, which begins in 1890, take us into that Victorian world of practical and thoughtful endeavour which must always be the intimidating part of the character of our grandparents. Sturt, for example, will stop reading a serious book like a *Life of John Brown* when he finds he has dropped into the one-way process of "just reading" and is not arguing and noting as he reads. The enormous Edwardian expansion and the hedonism which came with it, gave an air of tedium, moral pedantry and ridicule to the tenacious and prosaic methods of our grandparents, and it takes a character like Sturt's to make us appreciate that their minds were often informed by a broad and independent benevolence, a passionate steadiness of temper and a conviction that Virtue is something which must be created. The social conscience of late Victorianism is seen at its most attractive period in Sturt; it is imbued with lyrical energy. The early Socialism, with its aesthetic and reforming idealism, was like a promise of Spring to men like him; their politics were a good deal more concerned with what things are worth having in life and far more agitated about the arts, than they have since become. The doctrine of inevitability had not taken the innocence or colour from its cheeks. When Sturt found Salt writing that we must clean up society before we start

HOLIDAYS OF THE FUTURE



■ This seems a strange time to be thinking about holidays. The last summer holiday we had is now a faded, snapshotted memory, while the next is still an unplanned dream . . . . . hardly worth talking about yet.

Why not? We take a very optimistic view of the future. Already we are beginning to relish the new opportunities for travel after the war. The possibilities are staggering. Just think for a moment where all this experience in long distance flying, now being so grimly acquired, is going to lead us. To the United States and Canada, for certain. To South America, Hawaii, Tahiti, Bermuda, Mexico. Aeroplanes now fly the Atlantic in a few short and uneventful hours: civilian and military air pilots cross and recross from Canada and America without mishap.

Soon experienced airmen will be taking us over for our first holiday in the New World. South Africa, Egypt, the Holy Land seem distant places now and impossible for a short vacation, but in the future—well, we'll soon be there!

For week-ends we shall hop across to Switzerland or to the South of France as casually as to Brighton or Blackpool.

In the future we shall take our 'summer' holidays at any time of the year for the sunshine that we seek for the perfect holiday will always be found somewhere within quick and easy reach of our homes. Luxurious air-liners will ferry us across from autumn to spring, and out of winter into summer. Who knows but that the February of the future will not become the August of today?

If we have any qualms about the safety of this mode of travel there is one familiar phrase that should reassure us: "All our aircraft returned safely." World-wide travel by air is one of the absolute certainties of the future.

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thinking about art and literature, he was indignant. That was the way, he said, to turn society into a penitentiary. Sturt was one of Nature's gradualists.

The opening years of Sturt's *Journal* are full of his sceptical wrestlings with problems of this kind. He is not at his best in describing them, for there is a lot that is priggish. He is simply keeping his end up as an intellectual person. Though an original person he was not an original thinker. Sturt had not yet found himself. One sees too much of the provincial Narcissus, the diarist of the adolescent tradition, grimacing at himself in the mirror and looking with distaste at the state of his tongue. There is an awful quantity of nature-writing—where the moon is, what the wind is doing, how the weather changes. You suspect a sexual crisis and it turns out that this asthmatic bachelor who is living with his maiden sisters is going through something of the kind. Hints of guilt alternate with another plunge into Walt Whitman; aspirations to Culture come into conflict with the anaemia and "purism" of the art of the period. Are the Philistines right, after all, to turn away from Culture when they observe the devitalisation of its addicts? But Sturt is a quietly determined character; he does not vacillate, but, submitting himself to everything, prefers a virile conclusion:

> It is good husbandry, while protecting the wild stem that the fruit tree is grafted on, to keep down the suckers. The strength of savagery and the vitality of it—these I want, but not its harshness.

Whitman, you observe, has defeated "the sweetness and light of Arnold." And then, somewhere about 1896, the whole mood of the *Journal* changes; he stops looking into the mirror and looks out upon the world. He discovers what his talent is.

Of the English novelists Hardy alone has had any real knowledge of the countryman and came closer to his speech and habits than any other writer, no doubt because he was born half inside the countryman's jealous masonic society. Sturt is in Hardy's tradition, and the livelier half of Sturt's *Journal* shows him picking up his material. It is full of exact portraits. They are not, perhaps, very exciting, but they have a fidelity which, being uncommon, gives the pleasure of surprise. This, of a bricklayer, has the authentic note of rural fantasy, and contains a delightful example of that perpetual subject of country invention, the village comic:

> He was a teetotaller, and besides, extremely thin. His mates were wont to chaff him—tell him to hold on to the scaffold for fear of being blown away; and when they saw him on Sundays going to chapel with a child clinging to either hand, they praised the children for holding their daddy down. "He lent himself to it," said Stedman, "and moreover to make it worse for him he came from Pirbright." I laughed, knowing how Pirbright was spoken of contemptuously as "the end of the world," and how its inhabitants were said to be obliged to look in puddles "before they could tell whether it was raining . . ." The Pirbrighters are "moon-rakers," and they drive the fish in the canal under a bridge in rainy weather lest they should get wet.

Sturt is out eavesdropping and on the watch. Hearing a couple of lovers drawling on and on behind his garden hedge, he takes down their words verbatim, the rambling and flat inconsequences of rustic flirtation. (The urban novelist's country dialect is always logical and too witty.) He takes down what an old woman says to her donkey, what a soldier in a panic exclaims in a train, what the cadger says on the road or the songs that are sung in the pubs. These are interesting. They are not official folk stuff; the songs are those crude and vulgar ballads dating back probably to some time in the Army or to something heard at a music hall a generation before, and they still last. There is the perennial:

> I put more whitewash on the old gal's face
> Than I did upon the kitchen wall

with its catchy rhythm:

> Slap-dab, slap-dab, up ag-ain' the brickwork

and its rattling refrain:

> In and out the corners, round the johnny horners
> We were a pair of fair clean-goners.

How old is that song? There is a wealth of anecdote and talk and portraiture, and Sturt was not a reporter only. He wrote slowly and worked hard at getting his effects. Here is Mr. Baker's voice: a very good description of a throaty utterance:

> His voice is very strange—checked somewhere deep in his larynx, whence it gurgles up with a quiver, as if breaking a crust, like port wine may do, poured too hastily from the bottle. And when this voice comes preceded by a chuckle and shrug of the shoulders, one feels a kind of cordial comfort in his presence, like toast for tea and a warm fireside will give in winter-time.

Sturt's talent was for the documentary. He had a gift for all-round observation. He is too intellectually self-conscious and too lacking in idiosyncrasy to be an outstanding diarist, too earnest a man to have an unabashed candour. A touch of hypochondria—that's the only intimate thing. His diary was an exercise, not an indulgence. But it is very readable and Sturt has made a lasting place for himself in English records.

V. S. PRITCHETT

AN IMPORTANT HISTORY

Tudor Cornwall. By A. L. ROWSE. *Cape.* 18*s.*

Mr. A. L. Rowse, whose life of Sir Richard Grenville made his reputation as a historian, now produces the fruit of twelve years' research, a study of sixteenth-century Cornwall. No other English county lends itself so readily to separate treatment: linguistically as well as racially Cornwall was in Tudor times a precinct, a little Brittany or Wales jutting into an ocean that was only beginning to be charted. Miracle plays survive to show the force of the Cornish language, and the legends of the local saints, Ewe and Clether, Keverne and Tudy and Veep, mingled in the nostalgic imagination of the Celtic natives with the vast shadowy lineaments of King Arthur. The sea joined the Cornishmen to their Breton cousins, and the townsmen of Truro made pilgrimage to the Pardon of Lantrégar. In 1497 and 1549 there were Cornish rebellions that formed the last active protests of a people against the absorbent force of their English conquerors. One complaint of the Cornish against the Reformation was that the new Prayer Book was in a language they did not understand, English; and the Prayer Book did in due course play a large part in killing the ancient tongue.

There was no native aristocracy in Cornwall—even the Bishop had his throne in Devon—and the chief landlord was the absentee Duchy, which drained from the county an important part of its revenues. The gentry were the dominant class: like the people, they were closely intermarried, so that the same names continually recur — Arundells, Bodrugans, Carews, Edgcumbes, Godolphins (of Scilly), Killigrews, Mundys, Penkivels, Rowses, St. Aubyns, Treffreys, Tremaynes and Trevanians. The rude population lived in scattered hamlets and the towns were little more than villages: Bodmin with only 2,000 inhabitants was almost twice as large as any other Cornish borough. Yet to the Parliament of 1584 this population of less than 50,000 souls returned 44 members. Much of the land was barren, but during the century its production was much improved by enclosure, which here was effected by agreement. Fishing and tin-mining were hardly less important than agriculture. The little ports were busy with ships carrying away fish, tin, wool and hides, bringing back wine, fruit, linen and wood. Piracy at the expense of the French and Spaniards was endemic, and all classes were

receivers of pirated goods. Hunting, hawking, shooting, hurling and wrestling were the popular sports, while church ales and harvest dinners, May-days and Saints' Days, provided a recurrent focus for social life. Every man was knit to his neighbours, and nobody seems to have regretted the absence of privacy.

The Reformation, of course, makes the main theme of Mr. Rowse's history. Because old historians underestimated economic causes, their successors, one may think, incline to exaggerate them. Mr. Rowse, patiently building his history from thousands of rent-rolls and account-books, describes very convincingly the transfer of property that accompanied, and to a great extent prompted, the change of faith. The religious houses were *rentiers*, and consequently obstacles to the rising power of the *entrepreneur* laymen. "The struggle between Protestants and Catholics was in the main a struggle between two parties, over the body of a mentally passive people, for the possession of power." Monks and friars were not so much "corrupt" as "ineffective"—simony was the commonest sin. But if their usefulness was dwindling, their riches increased; uniting the Crown, the *parvenu* aristocracy of Cecils and Russells, the small gentry and the burgesses in an appetite for the magnificent loot. (The individual religious, at the Dissolution, were in Cornwall well provided for, and the heads of monasteries often sacrificed the interest of their houses to that of their relations.) The expense of the French and Spanish Wars obliged the Crown to sell most of the Church property it had seized; tithe became a common and desirable form of investment; and thus an ever-increasing number of persons acquired a vested interest in Protestantism. Similarly, employers benefited by the abolition of many Saints' Days, which they denounced as superstitious and deplored as injurious to their profits. Mr. Rowse points out that among the first purchasers of Church lands and chantries were Catholics, who later were ready to be persecuted for their faith. He understands the motive for purchase better than the motive for martyrdom. It was no economic purpose that brought Cuthbert Mayne from the safety of a Continental seminary to the scaffold in the market-place of Launceston; it was no economic purpose that in Mary's reign brought Agnes Prest from Launceston to be burnt in Exeter. Mr. Rowse, shocked by such un-Marxian conduct, attacks the Catholic victims for self-complacent fanaticism and folly, the Protestant for uninstructed self-will. The martyrs may have believed in tolerance no more than did their judges, but their fate commends them. If the historian has no sympathy for the sufferers, he can take refuge in a gentle irony; he should reserve his harshness, I suggest, for those who inflict suffering.

Mr. Rowse depicts the attachment of his ancestors to their ancient ways, the expressive rites and the company of handsomely decked images that brought poetry to their rigorous lives. (The average man clings more obstinately to his rites than to the doctrines that these rites connote.) It was this attachment that made the Cornish rebellion against Edward VI's Prayer Book a genuinely popular movement. At the end of the sixteenth century, he shows, housing and agriculture had improved, so that life was easier in Cornwall. The Cornish, he continues, had little reason to regret the Reformation, but they did regret it. One may think that they knew better than we can what served their happiness. If life was easier, it was duller; economic enrichment was accompanied by emotional impoverishment; there was no longer a channel proper for the expression of men's longings and their griefs. The new Establishment, so admirably adapted to the mild, sceptical English, by nature devoted to ethics rather than to religion, never captured the imagination of the Cornish (or of any Celts),

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and the eventual result was the rise of an ugly but satisfactorily fervent Nonconformity.

Mr. Rowse shows again how nationalism reinforced the greed of a rising class to ensure the triumph of the Reformation. Mary's Spanish marriage killed the possibility of England remaining Catholic. In the next reign Cuthbert Mayne admitted that if a Catholic prince were to invade the country to reclaim it for Rome, all Catholics should be ready to help the invader. Thus the more pious the adherents of the Old Religion, the more suspect they were as Fifth Columnists. The Catholic gentry became subject to intolerable fines, and in time either conformed or were reduced to the obscurity of the poor. In Cornwall to-day no landed family of old Catholics survives. And, one may add, on the estates where monks and friars once passed their devoted or lethargic lives, the class that despoiled them is now in turn being expropriated. And for the same reason—not corruption but ineffectiveness.

At one moment Mr. Rowse wonders whether the historian's task may not be "ultimately impossible, a fugitive chasing of shadows that for ever elude him, an attempt to make dry bones live." At another, an accord between documents gives him "confidence in this strange business of reconstructing the past out of bits of paper and fragments and stones." A conscientious modern historian, he loads his text with countless figures from the previously unpublished sources on which he bases his conclusions. I wish that much of this valuable raw material could have been consigned to appendices, for it is oppressive to the general reader. Yet it is to the general reader that I wish to recommend this history—indeed I am in no way qualified to recommend it to historians. Mr. Rowse's execution is as thoughtful as his design; he is felicitous in phrase, and quick to draw enlightening parallels from the present. I have read his book with fascinated interest, and I am confident that nobody could finish it without having acquired a clearer picture of Tudor society and the origins of contemporary England.

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"Yet he" (the artist) "alone knows the way out of the jungle and every complete work of art is a lodestone to guide our feet to safety." (Page 14.)

Good words, these, grand words. They are followed by more than two hundred illustrations, of which perhaps twenty have some claim to be considered works of art, while of the rest many would be unworthy of papering a canteen or an observer-post.

In England we have some admirable draughtsmen and poster-makers; one of them, Kauffer, who happens to be an American, is represented by a single, minute drawing; another, Bawden, has half a page of line engravings. A drawing by John, another by Rex Whistler and two by Skeaping rightly form part of the adventure; and there, so far as British art—I use the word "art" advisedly—is concerned, the matter ends. What a pity Mr. Laver did not ask Shell-Mex for a few names. In America there are excellent illustrators; and Mr. Laver has had the luck to discover two pieces by Gaston Lachaise and one—a very small one—by Thurber. This is poked away in the corner of a page which it shares with a Bemelmans, a Rea and a Skeaping; the whole of the opposite page is sacred to Fougasse. No room has been found for anything by Peter Arno. Illustrated books and albums are amongst the glories of modern France; and we are duly favoured with one Matisse and one Cocteau. On the other hand there is a surprise packet from Central Europe. The men most copiously represented are Eric Fraser, Bobri, Cadmus, Holme, Libis, Spurrier, Topolski. Also, generally speaking, these do stand out from the ruck; for the bulk of the stuff is fit only to catch the eye of someone turning over the advertisement pages of a magazine. And even for that humble function much would be found inadequate by a tasteful business manager.

What does it all mean? What does the title mean? For whom will this book be an adventure? Presumably for some mysterious public devoted to some sport or pastime to me unknown. The whole thing might be ignored as a bad joke were it not that the compiler is keeper of Paintings and Engravings at the Victoria and Albert Museum. That, I confess, is no joke. And what are we to make of those fine phrases in the Introduction? There is said to be an art of sinking. On the jacket of this book is advertised, under the comprehensive title "Simple Joys," a series of books called *How to Draw Trees*, *How to Draw Birds*, *How to Draw Dogs*, etc.; I suggest that this adventure be added to the list under the title *How to Draw Back*.

CLIVE BELL

THE COBURG STYLE

In Napoleonic Days. Extracts from the private diary of Augusta, Duchess of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, Queen Victoria's maternal grandmother, 1806–1821. Selected and translated by H.R.H. PRINCESS BEATRICE. *John Murray.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Any new material which further illuminates the successful history of the busy house of Coburg during the nineteenth century is always welcome, and a royal diary, however vapid, has a wide and faintly nostalgic appeal. That of Augusta, Duchess of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, does not aspire to be a document of historical importance, and those authors who have already written of the Duchess's illustrious family need have no particular regrets that her diary was not at their disposal. Some of her entries are indeed rather trivial, and perhaps were hardly intended by the Duchess for publication. "To-morrow I am going to Lobenstein and Victoire in another few days to Ebersdorf," for example, must presumably fall into that category, while "Good Mensdorff left us to-day. May God's blessing go with him!" has little informative value and is only unintentionally amusing. Nevertheless, the Duchess herself, who, in the words of Frederic Sholerl, "never lost sight for a moment of her destination as a wife and mother," cannot be ignored. She was the mother of two Kings, Ferdinand II of Portugal and Leopold, first King of the Belgians, and the grandmother of both Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort. Of this happy destiny she was unfortunately unaware when she died in 1831, but some of her more salient characteristics were clearly inherited by her most important grandchild. Like Queen Victoria she had a large family and married them off as well as she possibly could, although, of course, no elation at these matrimonial successes is indicated in her essentially reticent and "ladylike" diary. Ernest, her eldest son, she married to Louise, heiress of the Duke of Gotha, while Ferdinand made an equally prudent match with Antoinette, the wealthy daughter of Prince Cohary. Of the latter alliance she wrote with refreshing honesty that "although this unexpected news (of their engagement) has

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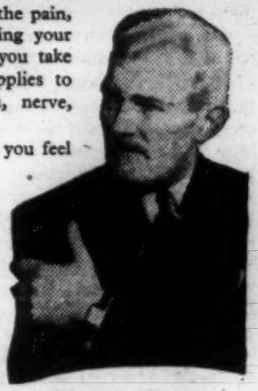

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greatly agitated me . . . he is fortunate to have captivated such an heiress." But naturally it was with Leopold's marriage with the Regent's daughter that the Duchess was most satisfied. "To-day I read in the papers that a decision has been reached as to whom Princess Charlotte of Wales is to marry," she wrote on January 28th, 1816, and it is curious that the Duchess should have received the first information of this triumph not from Leopold, but from the press. But the Duchess who appears to have been indefatigable in her search for the smallest fly in the fairest ointment, then wrote: "This news, which ought to make me proud, worries me very much." Less than two years later she had, of course, reason to lament when Princess Charlotte died after giving birth to a still-born son, and she wrote with some perspicacity: "Oh, why had mother and child to die together?" Why, indeed! since if only the child had lived, Leopold might have become Regent of Great Britain during his son's minority on the throne. One cannot ask the Duchess to refer to the repercussions of the Princess's death; of how her doctor blew his brains out shortly after, and of the rumour living to this day that her nurse, Mrs. Griffiths, was in the pay of the Duke of Cumberland, who was not over-anxious that his niece or her child should survive the *accouchement*. It would be idle to expect such interesting revelations in a royal diary.

Less than two months after the Princess's death the Duchess made an entry in her diary which should dispose of the general idea that it was this event which caused the Duke of Kent to abandon the carefree existence of the official bachelor and to marry the Duchess's widowed daughter Victoire in order to provide a possible heir for the throne. In January, 1818, the Duchess referred to Kent's intention of asking for her hand and continued: "In October, 1816, and last year she could not make up her mind, but now she is more inclined to accept, and looks forward calmly to a new life." This indicates that the Duke of Kent had expressed his desire to marry Victoire on two previous occasions; the first being more than a year before Princess Charlotte died.

Judging from her diary the Duchess of Saxe-Coburg possessed a melancholic disposition, and this entry, for example, written at Coburg in 1807, "my thoughts turn entirely to the past, and to the beloved one (her deceased Duke) who used to delight in making me and the children happy on this Christmas Eve," might well have been written by her grand-daughter Victoria at Windsor in December, 1861. But fortunately her diary is not entirely concerned with woes and trivialities, and in one entry at least the Duchess shows an imaginative side to her nature. "After the cheerfulness of the fine town of Berlin," she wrote in 1807, "Dresden strikes me as very dreary, rather like an old lady, tastelessly arrayed in heavy, unsuitable garments, defying modern times, whereas Berlin resembles an elegant young bride whom the war has hardly touched." This passage makes strange reading to-day.

This diary has been so ably translated as to convey the impression it was written in English.

HOLDEN

REBUILDING

Town and Country Planning. By GILBERT AND ELIZABETH GLEN MCALLISTER. *Faber.* 12s. 6d

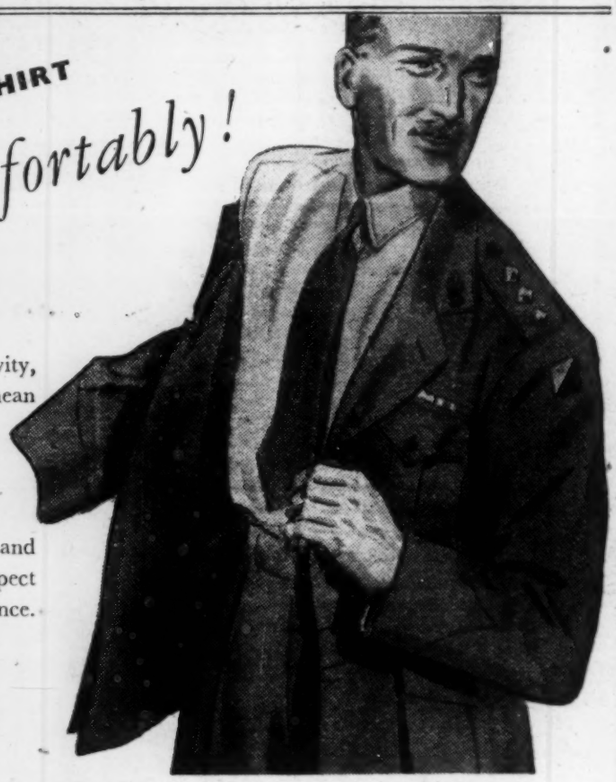
Britain Must Rebuild. By FRANK PICK. *Kegan Paul.* 1s.

Start Planning Britain Now. By RITCHIE CALDER. *Kegan Paul.* 1s.

The Battle of the Planners is a grand, inspiriting spectacle. It is delightful to watch the Pro-Flats being unfair to the Pro-Cottages, and the Georgians giving the Functionalists a nasty one below the belt. Moreover, every discussion on town or regional planning turns into a free-for-all, with the women blazing on the location of the sink, the pram, and the greengrocer's shop, and the men in conflict on their journey to work, and the indefeasible right of all Britons to grow beans and keep chickens. This fury is just, righteous and incomparably healthier than the indifference which, a generation since, let the building estates defile the countryside while architects used their talents for designing banks, stores and palaces for profiteers. For it means that intelligent leadership in planning will find enthusiastic though confused support. The people want decent houses, dignified towns, convenient work-places, and beautiful country. The McAllisters belong to the town-planning tradition. Their norm is the family. A town is a place for family living; planning is "design and harmony in our physical environment." For this school the proper home is a house in a garden; the garden city with compactly sited residential and factory quarters, a civic centre and an agricultural belt is the ideal. New towns built on this plan would make it possible to limit and even to diminish the overgrown cities. The authors cunningly quote Mr. Maxwell Fry against high buildings: "To live in boxes lifted off the ground and away from contact with the earth is not the life of a free man"; although they illustrate his Ladbroke Grove flats. They give much information on the improvement in health which goes with better housing, on housing law, the organisation of the building trade, building costs, and the detailed history of town planning up to the appointment of the Uthwatt Committee. The packed matter is well handled and the book is lucidly and agreeably written.

Mr. Pick is an interesting example of the urban idealist with a sense of form. His proposals are regions based on the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms; the prohibition of building on farm land; the dedication of beautiful country and the seaside as national parks. Then industry should be concentrated at the coalfields, docks and railway centres. Towns should be concentrated, too; Mr. Pick anathematises the "diffused pepper-pot sprawl of houses devouring the country and ultimately offering neither the conveniences of town nor the delights of the country." A road policy is wanted; the great motor-roads are disfiguring death-traps. City streets should be narrowish—a dubious proposition; the fine proportion of Edinburgh New Town, for instance, lies greatly in its wide streets. But as a traffic expert the writer has authority to say that the engineers and their mania for speed must be made the servants not the masters of the country. Town and country are different and their limits should be sharply defined. Mr. Pick envisages cities with properly sited civic buildings; posts, halls, clubs in the centre, hospitals and schools at the green edge; shaped, star-fashion with wedges of country running in and of building tapering out. He has an interesting scheme for regional planning "parliaments" composed of local representatives and experts. The ideas and the style of the pamphlet are stimulating and sometimes provocative. For instance, it contains no consideration for the true popular art of Britain, which is gardening. Mr. Pick's public parks, landscaped no doubt by professionals, leave no room for the clerk to cherish his rose-bed, nor for the child to sow nasturtiums and water pansies. Instead are offered what indeed are crying wants, increased social sense and civic pride.

Ritchie Calder views the problem from the angle of the people, slum-bred and now blitzed out of their slums, even; of the evacuated city children learning country ways. He thinks the industrial concentration of the "Quadrant" bounded by Manchester, Leeds, London,



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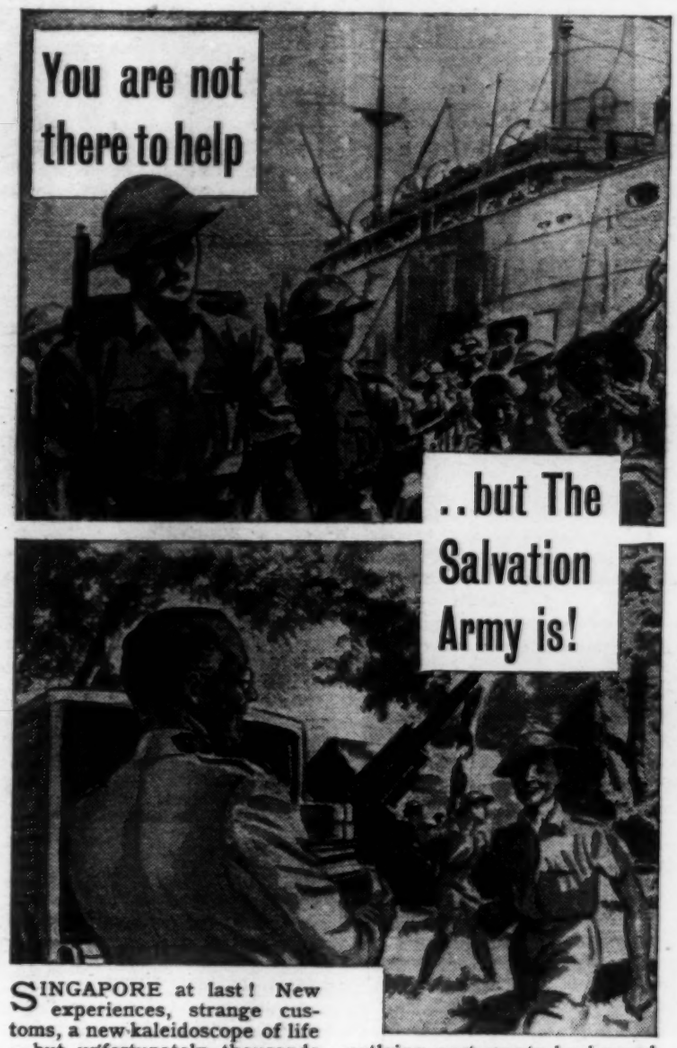

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Southampton and Bristol is a menace, and wants Britain to be replanned with new industries in decaying towns, and new towns in depopulated regions like the Highlands. His most telling passages are proposals for immediate measures, based upon the experience of the bombardment, for reorganising social services and local government.

These authors are agreed in their main principles: the need for planning; the importance of agriculture; the condemnation of slum, suburb and the proliferating great city; the inevitable socialisation of the land. By comparison their differences are of minor importance. They sink to insignificance beside the entrenched hostility of the moneyed interests which batten on slum rents and speculative building. The best thing the progressives could do, here and now, is to combine to work their revolution.

FREDA WHITE

Shooting to Kill. By ANDREW G. ELLIOT. *Thorsons.* 1s. 6d.

If and when the Germans succeed in landing an invading army in this country, Mr. Elliot hopes to see the Home Guard disposing of their opponents neatly and with the minimum of formality. He discusses a number of practical methods of dealing with an enemy who may arrive in the small hours by parachute, troop carrier or tank. He gives also hints on how to shoot at moving and semi-visible men rather than at stationary targets on the range, how to load and aim quickly, how to see without being seen, what to look for and, possibly most important, how to kill without being killed. This little book should make a very useful supplement to the more orthodox training manuals, provided that the lessons are duly assimilated before the "balloon goes up."

Scrutiny. June Quarter. 2s. 6d.

The June number of *Scrutiny* contains an appeal to the reader. A hundred more subscribers are wanted if the journal is to carry on. This exceedingly modest demand on the public will, we hope, be met. Dr. Leavis has made a "place" for himself and his contributors which deserves keeping. During its ten years of publication, with no funds and a comparatively small circulation, *Scrutiny* has strictly maintained its standards. The pages of *Scrutiny* have been kept academical both in the good and the bad sense. The merits of the Leavis school of criticism are its uncompromising honesty, its intellectual devotion, its adherence to Eliot-Richards principles of criticism. Its defects are a certain aridity and priggishness which the reader may find at times infuriating; the reaction against belle-lettrism has gone so far that any wit or elegance in critical writing is regarded with suspicion. This does not make for readability, but very good work can be done in spite of it. There is an essay in the June number on Joseph Conrad by Dr. Leavis, who illustrates a number of points in his analysis of Conrad's atmosphere; though how much these add up to one must leave until reading the second half of the essay, which presumably will appear in the next number. There are other essays on Nietzsche and Jane Austen, and a number of reviews, the best of which are on MacNeice's last book of poems and Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

Week-end Competitions

No. 606

Set by William Whitebait

A recent book of "helpful biblical quotations," included "Lift up thy voice" as a text for singers and orators, and "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" for pressed business-men. The usual prizes are offered for the best quotations from English literature with a similarly "useful" application for three of the following: share-pushers, hairdressers, jockeys, reviewers, Divorce Court judges, land girls, district visitors, burglars, dentists, ballet dancers and munition workers.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, September 22nd.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 603

Set by Lionel Fielden

Miss Sarah Churchill, reading Arnold's *Dover Beach* on the wireless, altered the last line to "When gigantic armies clash by night"—presumably because our army ought not to be ignorant and ought to be gigantic. The usual prizes are offered for a set of three similarly infelicitous amendments that might be made, for propagandist purposes, of famous lines in English poetry. The requirements of scansion, as the above example shows, can safely be neglected.

Report by Lionel Fielden

I fear that Sarah Churchill still holds the palm, if not the prize, for this competition. This may be due to the fact, for which I apologise, that the invitation was perhaps clumsily worded. What I wanted was the rage-cum-laughter shock which Sarah Churchill's rendering gave me. Matthew Arnold, I felt, must have been reduced to laughter before he had made even a half-turn in his grave.

Competitors divided themselves into two camps—those who missed entirely the idea of bathos and the clerihewish break of metre, and those who got the idea and grappled with it. Some of the first group, though they fail as competitors, are diverting enough to quote—

"Our work is always with us, late and soon,
Getting and saving we conserve our powers."
(Sir Robert Witt)

"She stood in tears among the home-grown corn."
(N. E. Jones)

"And all our yesterdays have lighted heroes
The way to dusty death."
(Leslie Johnson)

"Tell me where is National Bread."
(E. W. Fordham)

(To U.S.A.)
"Sufficient are thine arms alone
And our defence is sure."
(Stanley Sharpless)

The more subtle are more difficult to judge, particularly as no one competitor seemed to me to score more than one bull's-eye. I liked F. W. Reed's suggestion for the Prime Minister—

"Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which eventually will
Move earth and heaven; that which we are, we are."

William Bliss struck a good note with his—

"Who . . .
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause:
And, while the Mortal Mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of the United States' applause:
This is the Happy Warrior . . ."

and M. Snow had a nice anti-climax with—

"This blessed plot, this earth, this realm,
this British Commonwealth of Nations."

I recommend that the first prize be divided between R. C. O. and N. P. Meadway, who each scored one bull and one inner, and the second between Towanbucket and John Ward, who scored one bull and two inners respectively.

FIRST PRIZE

(I)

"Breathes there a man with soul so dead
Who never to himself has said:
This is my own, my native Empire?"

"Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet!
We won't forget—we won't forget."

R. C. O.

(II)

"That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever Great Britain and Northern Ireland."

"My heart leaps up when I behold
A Hurricane in the sky."

N. P. MEADWAY.

SECOND PRIZE

(I)

"Better fifty years of our Empire than a cycle of Cathay."

"One touch of nature makes the Allies kin."

"Nazi-bombed choirs, where late the sweet birds sang."

TOWANBUCKET.

(II)

Rubaiyat of Omar Bracken

"Oh the brave music of a democratic drum!"

Horatius at the Dnieper.

"For how can man die better than facing fearful odds
For the ashes on his hearth at home and the kettle on the hob?"

JOHN WARD.

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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By URBANUS

GAMBLING AND MEXICAN EAGLE—FROZEN STERLING AND FILMS—CINEMA SHARES—OIL SUPPLIES

THE Stock Exchange is cheerful—not only about Government stocks, which have risen to new high levels this week, but about developing gold mines, defaulted bonds and other gambles. Among the depreciated South American stocks which speculators have been picking up, I should mention Mexican Eagles, which have risen this year from 5*s.* 10½*d.* to 9*s.* 6*d.* Behind this rise is the expectation of an agreement between the Mexican Government and the expropriated oil companies. It is apparently a fact that a formula for the settlement of the oil dispute has been presented to the American companies. This calls for an immediate payment in cash of $9 millions, further payments in oil at 20 per cent. under market prices and a stabilisation loan to Mexico of $30 millions, together with credits for the "production of strategic materials and the purchase of military supplies." Whether the Mexican Eagle is a party to this scheme is not clear and I think that caution is desirable on the part of speculators. When Mexican Eagle really comes to a settlement with the Mexican Government the "insiders" will buy their shares much more heavily than has been apparent recently in the market.

* * *

No figure has ever been published of the amount of frozen sterling held by the American film companies, but I have heard guesses ranging from £5,000,000 to £8,000,000 which seem to me not unreasonable. It was announced this week that the English branch of the United Artists Corporation would invest £500,000 of their frozen money in producing films in British studios. Other Hollywood companies are already using their frozen money in British productions—for example, R.K.O., Paramount, which has just completed *Hatter's Castle* at the Denham studios, and Warner Brothers, who have never stopped work at their Teddington Studios since the war started. It is said that Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer will also shortly resume work in British studios. This should not lead anyone to suppose that there will be a boom in British film production. There is a war on and we cannot spare technicians for the British film industry without limit when they are wanted for camera and electrical work in the fighting services. Moreover, there is a shortage of British stars, male and female, and unless the film companies intend to start an aeroplane ferry service between Hollywood and Denham, I do not see how this difficulty can be overcome during the war. If the blocked sterling of the American film companies remains frozen for a year or so after the war, then we might see a boom in British films—to the great profit of the Prudential, which now owns most of the studio space. In the meantime, British cinema companies are not doing too badly even in wartime. Their revenues have recently revived—thanks to bad summer weather, an absence of "blitz" and some good films to show. An analysis of the film industry by a firm of stockbrokers suggests that British cinemas can now be regarded as "steady profitmakers." Certainly, an industry with 4,000 cinemas enjoying a cash turnover of between £40,000,000 and £50,000,000 a year has a good financial starting point, but its profitability depends upon a variety of causes—mainly outside its control—and I would not yet regard it as a stable industry for the investor. The high yield basis assigned to the securities of Associated British Picture, Gaumont British and Odeon, which control about a quarter of the country's cinemas, means that the Stock Exchange as a whole does not regard the industry as offering stable security.

* * *

Hitler's threat to the oil supplies of the Allies will look extremely ugly if and when the German forces invade Turkey. It is, therefore, all the more important that American oil supplies should be reaching Russia and Great Britain in increasing quantities. The difficulty is that the American consumer will not accept restrictions upon his petrol buying unless America is definitely in the war and imposes petrol rationing. Appeals by the American Government to private motorists to reduce their consumption of petrol have had no effect. An order which came into effect in August prohibiting the sale of petrol in the Eastern States between the hours of 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. was actually followed by an increase in consumption. The Government then issued an order reducing the supplies of petrol in seventeen Eastern States by 10 per cent. as compared with July and by 15 per cent. in September as compared with August. It remains to be seen whether this order will not be defeated by the petrol bootleggers. There is an acute oil shortage on the Atlantic coast as a result of the transfer of tankers to Great Britain and the U.S. Navy, which has reduced the tonnage available for the transport of oil from the Gulf to the Eastern States by about 20 per cent. This will mean a much more drastic restriction on petrol consumption in the Eastern States of America, while the additional pipe lines are being built from the Gulf oilfields to the Eastern markets. As the American citizen moves and has his being in a motor car, the rationing of petrol would shock him as much as the rationing of beer would shock the workers in Great Britain.

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